OPA: Referral patients, escorts sent at high-cost unrestricted airfare rates. PAGE 2
'Torres, family made 85 boating trips from 2017 to July 2021' PAGE 4

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

$1

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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BALANCING ACT
A lone fisherman casts into the Pacific Ocean Tuesday morning from atop Banzai Cliff on Saipan.

MARK FARMER

CCC seeks to revoke IPI license

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew Yeom has filed four complaints against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, each of them seeking the immediate revocation of IPI's exclusive Saipan casino license, for alleged unwillingness to comply with CCC's final order in four enforcement actions that were entered over five months ago.

Yeom

Blaise

Yeom, through assistant attorney general Keisha Blaise, filed before the CCC two complaints last Sept. 17 and two others last Sept. 28.

The complaints arose from IPI's alleged failure to pay the $3.1 million casino regulatory fee on Oct. 1, 2020, and subsequently on March 3, 2021, and its failure to pay the $15.5 million annual exclusive casino license fee on Aug. 12, 2020, and subsequently on Aug. 12, 2021.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still awaiting comments from IPI.

See CCC on Page 4

CNMI COVID total now 268

Guam logs 3 more COVID deaths; 70 hospitalized

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. announced yesterday that one incoming traveler tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 268.

In Guam, the island's Joint Information Center reported Tuesday the U.S. territory's 193rd, 194th, and 195th COVID-19-related deaths. The JIC also reported that there are currently 70 individuals

See CNMI on Page 4

Marciano honored with Japan foreign minister award

Gordon Ichihara Marciano, right, bows as he receives the Japan Foreign Minister's Commendation Award from Consul Ono Kazuhiko of the Consular Office of Japan yesterday at Kevin's Prime Rib & Seafood at Aqua Resort Club Saipan. JOSHUA SANTOS

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gordon Ichihara Marciano was presented yesterday with the Japan Foreign Minister's Commendation Award, making him the only fourth person in the CNMI to receive this award and the second local resident who has received the award in the past five years.

Consul Ono Kazuhiko, who

See MARCIANO on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:44pm, Sept. 29, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	82%
Days since last community transmission	189

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	30,026
Fully Vaccinated:	29,295
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,866
Fully Vaccinated:	4,644
Janssen	
Fully Vaccinated:	798

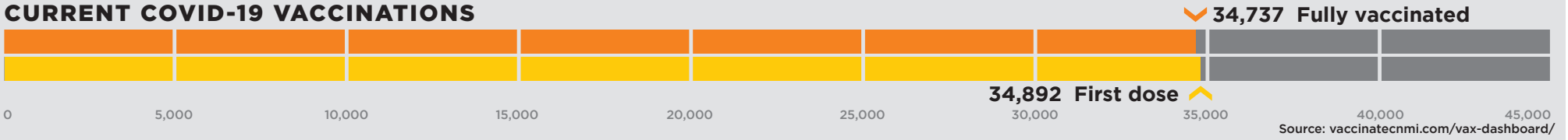
GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14.705	NU*	14,705
Recovered	11,149	NU*	11,149
Active	3,361	NU*	3,361
Deaths	195	NU*	195

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	267	1	268
Traced via Travel Screening	230	1	231
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

*NU - No updates

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children may not be available until November.

PAGE 12

ASIA
North Korea said it has successfully tested a new hypersonic missile.

PAGE 13

ENVIRONMENT
The U.S. government is declaring the ivory-billed woodpecker and 22 other species extinct.

PAGE 14

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

OPA: Referral patients, escorts sent at high-cost unrestricted airfare rates

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Office of the Public Auditor has found that patients and/or escorts sent off-island under the CNMI Medical Referral Services Office's program were being sent at high-cost unrestricted economy airfare rates.

In its audit report released last week on MRSO's internal controls for fiscal years 2018 to 2020, OPA noted that airfares are purchased by MRSO for approved medical referral patients and escorts at standard high-cost airfare rates.

OPA recommended that MRSO negotiate and create an agreement with travel agencies to make sure that patients and their escorts are being sent on cost-effective airfare rates.

MRSO director Ronald D. Sablan agreed with OPA's recommendation.

Sablan said a medical referral fee had been established to avoid charges on date changes, rebookings, cancellations, and reissuance fees, which depended on patient medical status. However, a new travel agency recently challenged the fixed fee. Sablan said that MRSO now deal directly with the airline and bypass the travel agencies using credit card to avail the lowest cost available and avoid such charges. Sablan said this is currently in final stage of negotiation and to be finalized upon issuance of a credit card.

In the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s response, CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muna said they are unable to concur or disagree with OPA's finding as they are not a party to these agreements.

OPA said these pre-determined airfare rates are for unrestricted roundtrip airfare with economy seats that ranges between $305 to $4,350 per traveler and vary across referral locations.

OPA learned that the predetermined high-cost airfare rates were considered to be "special rates" set by a travel agency through a previous agreement, but MRSO could not provide a copy of the agreement.

OPA said it requested for a copy of the agreement from the travel agencies associated with MRSO; however, none of the travel agencies had existing or previously executed agreements.

At OPA's request, travel agencies associated with MRSO provided a listing of all airfares for medical referral patients and escorts for fiscal years 2018 to 2020.

Based on the data provided, OPA found significant disparities between the number of travelers sent to Guam, Honolulu, Manila, and San Diego in fiscal years 2018-2020. OPA said despite the disparities of travelers to these locations, the costs incurred across referral locations are comparable.

OPA said that, as a best practice, the standards state that "a control cannot be effectively implemented if it was not effectively designed."

In addition, OPA said the standards also state that "a deficiency in implementation exists when a properly designed control is not implemented correctly in the internal control system."

In its internal policy, MRSO is responsible for facilitating the referral of patients to recognized referral health care facilities outside the CNMI for extended medical care. This includes lodging, ground transportation, and subsistence allowance.

MP Holdings lauds first meeting with House Gaming Committee

E-gaming operator MP Holdings LLC, which owns Saipan Vegas in Chalan Laulau, is encouraged by its first meeting with the House of Representatives' Gaming Committee, saying it looks forward to more detailed discussions on Saipan Local Law 22-6, which doubled e-gaming taxes and has negatively impacted its business.

The House Gaming Committee, which is chaired by Rep. Ed Propst (D-Saipan) held a public hearing on the e-gaming tax increase last Friday, Sept. 17, and promised another more detailed meeting to further discuss the tax increase, in an effort to reach an amicable solution with the e-gaming operator.

In a statement yesterday, Bart Jackson, general manager of MP Holdings, said, "We were very encouraged by our first meeting with the House Gaming Committee and being allowed to have some initial discussions and answer some of the committee members' questions on the impact of the doubling of the gaming taxes on our e-gaming venues.

"We would like to publicly acknowledge [committee chairman] Rep. Ed Propst's positive comments in the meeting to 'move forward through discussion and dialogue, without any anger and animosity.'

"We are hopeful that the next meeting with the House Gaming Committee will be soon and we can continue these productive discussions and we can provide more details to the committee on the impact of the increase in gaming taxes on our business, so we can reach an amicable solution and save over 70 local jobs." ***(Saipan Tribune)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SHRM meeting on Oct. 13

The Society for Human Resource Management-CNMI Chapter will have its general membership meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, from 8:30am to 11:30am, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom. Doors will open at 8am.

The meeting, which will have the theme "Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Context in the Workplace,"will feature:

■ Dr. Bobby Cruz - director for Instructional Technology and Distance Education and co-director for PSS Mental Health;

■ Dr. Jennifer Maratita - licensed mental health counselor and mental health specialist and Clinical Services supervisor for PSS Student Support Services.

This meeting includes breakfast. Seats are limited, so reserve your seat by contacting Denise Montenegro at denise.montenegro@hyatt.com, Penelope Jones at penelope.jones@hyatt.com or by calling at 670-323-5866/67. Price is $25 for SHRM members and $35 for non-members.

If you have any questions that would like to be addressed at the meetinhg, submit them via email to shrmnmichapter@gmail.com prior to the meeting. ***(PR)***

MVA office hours on Saipan

The Marianas Visitors Authority Saipan office will be closed on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 2021, for professional development. Also, the office will be temporarily closed for lunch through October from 12pm to 1pm, but will remain open weekdays (except official holidays and Oct. 1) from 8am to 12pm and from 1pm to 5pm. For more information, call 664-3200 or email info@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

Man allegedly assault woman over a phone

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man was recently arrested for allegedly punching a woman in the face following a heated argument over a cellphone.

Department of Public Safety officers arrested Vincent K. "Vkay" Antonois, 29, over the weekend, for allegedly punching his girlfriend in the face when she refused to let him borrow her phone to play music.

According to the police report, at about 11:14am last Friday, police were dispatched to respond to an assault incident in Kagman.

At the scene, police met with Antonois' girlfriend who reportedly had a cut on her bottom lip. The woman was treated by medical staff.

While she was being treated, the woman told police that at around 10:30am that same day, she was on her phone talking to her mother when Antonois asked her for her cellphone.

She said she told Antonois to wait but he insisted that he needed the phone because he wanted to play music. This led to a heated argument between the couple.

The victim said Antonois allegedly took their son and was about to leave the home but she forcefully stopped him from leaving. Antonois allegedly turned around and punched the victim on her lip and left.

The woman said called police immediately after the incident but was not able to get police assistance. It was learned that when police first arrived, Antonois' family told them that everything was fine and help wasn't needed.

Police learned that Antonois allegedly threatened the victim that if she called for police again, he would stab her in her sleep. The victim however, called police for a second time after Antonois left the home to go to a friend's house.

After speaking with the victim, police arrested Antonois and detained him at the Department of Corrections.

During his bail hearing last Monday, Superior Court Associate Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio imposed a $3,000 cash bail on Antonois on charges of disturbing the peace, assault and battery, assault, and interfering with a domestic violence report.

He is set to return to court on Oct.r 6 for a preliminary hearing, followed by an arraignment on Oct. 18.

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2020 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL — SALE PRICE $24,995 • 17,834 MILES • STK: 20H072D • KBB: $25,535
2016 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT — SALE PRICE $14,995 • 55,153 MILES • STK:16R269 • KBB: $14,450
2015 TOYOTA CAMRY LE — SALE PRICE $19,995 • 44,202 MILES • STK: 15P325 • KBB: $20,295
2019 HONDA CR-V LX — SALE PRICE $25,995 • 24,306 MILES • STK: 21D019B • KBB: $26,748
2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER — SALE PRICE $16,995 • 39,217 MILES • STK: 20H068A • KBB: $16,830
2018 MAZDA 3 MAZDA3 — SALE PRICE $19,295 • 11,576 MILES • STK:18HS902 • KBB: $19,328
2019 MAZDA CX-5 GT — SOLD — SALE PRICE $27,995 • 21,303 MILES • STK: 19R272 • KBB: $29,948
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT — SALE PRICE $18,995 • 10,120 MILES • STK:8HS879 • KBB: $19,904
2019 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL — SOLD — SALE PRICE $19,995 • 20,026 MILES • STK:9H040D • KBB: $21,411
2015 JEEP WRANGLER SPORT — SALE PRICE $31,995 • 70,502 MILES • STK: 5P279 • KBB: $32,299
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 — SALE PRICE $18,995 • 10,324 MILES • STK:18HS904 • KBB: $19,904
2020 HYUNDAI KONA SPORT — SALE PRICE $21,995 • 9,680 MILES • STK: 22M010A • KBB: $22,196
2017 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5 4WD — SOLD — SALE PRICE $34,995 • 40,350 MILES • STK: 21H045A • KBB: $37,126
2011 TOYOTA 4RUNNER — SALE PRICE $18,995 • 77,762 MILES • STK:11P314 • KBB: $21,336
2015 FORD EXPLORER XLT — SALE PRICE $22,995 • 18,617 MILES • STK: 15HS981 • KBB: $23,603
2018 JEEP WRANGLER SPORT 4WD — SALE PRICE $45,995 • 26,205 MILES • STK: 18P345

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‘Torres, family made 85 boating trips from 2017 to July 2021’

» Boating Safety commander testifies they don’t take Torres on DPS boat for fishing, hunting trips

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Department of Public Safety Boating Safety commander Kevin Aldan testified yesterday before the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee regarding numerous boating trips made by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, his wife, and some family members.

In response to the question from Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan), Aldan said they don’t take Torres aboard Boating Safety boats for fishing. Aldan said DPS Boating Safety officers would escort or shadow the governor as he goes on his own boat during fishing.

The Boating Safety commander said he can’t recall how many fishing trips the governor took in his numerous trips.

“I can’t just put a number to it,” said Aldan, adding that he possibly joined some of those fishing trips.

He remembers escorting Torres on a fishing trip to Tinian.

Aldan said he is aware of Boating Safety officers and vessels were being used to take the governor and the first lady on trips to Managaha, but that that he can’t recall how many times he was on those trips.

Attao said the vessel reports or logbooks submitted to the JGO Committee document at least 85 boating trips with Torres and his family from March 2017 to July 2021 using DPS Search and Rescue vessels, multiple Boating Safety personnel, thousands of gallons of government-funded fuel and other boating resources.

Aldan said if it’s in the documents that they submitted, then the 85 boating trips were accurate.

Aldan said he is not aware if Torres uses other government vessels besides DPS boats for recreational transportation.

JGO Committee chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said in her remarks that the evidence shows that Torres, his wife, numerous members of their family, and friends went to Pagan using CNMI funds for recreational purposes, while the CNMI was under a lockdown due to COVID-19.

Babauta said DPS officers testified that it is not DPS procedure to use personal funding for any Boating Safety needs.

She said it is clear that the grantor of the recreational Boating Safety, in this case the U.S. Coast Guard, stated in an email to Boating Safety and DPS Commissioner Robert Guerrero that “protecting public officials would fall outside of the recreational Boating Safety realm and would not be an allowable cost.”

Boating Safety commander Kevin Aldan testifies before the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee about the numerous boating trips made by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and his family from 2015 to 2021. Next to Aldan is his counsel, Anthony Aguon. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The JGO is investigating Torres’ expenditures of public funds and travels.

At the hearing, Rep. Donald M. Manglona (D-Saipan) showed a Boating Safety logbook about a boating trip to the Northern Islands on Aug. 5, 2017. Manglona asked who were the boat crew with Torres that was referred in the logbook. Aldan said he does not know as it’s not indicated in the logbook.

Aldan also stated that a boat which was in that trip possibly belongs to the governor’s brother.

Manglona asked why the officers were on Boating Safety Zodiac 3 boat monitoring or escorting the governor, who was on a birthday camping trip to Sarigan. The commander replied that it’s for personal security detail issue.

Manglona asked why would a Boating Safety boat be used to escort the boat of governor’s brother, Vincent Torres, on a personal birthday camping trip.

Aldan said if the governor is on board, then they need to follow him. He, however, stated that he was not aware that it was a personal camping trip for the governor and his brothers.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) followed up Manglona’s question. He asked if there was any official business on this trip or it was personal.

Aldan said based on the log, it’s hard for him to say if it’s personal or official business. He said they don’t ask what’s the business of the governor as they just follow the DPS commissioner’s order to provide personal security.

Propst cited a Boating Safety report log for Aug. 13, 2017, in which Boating Safety officers shadowed a boat for Anatahan. He asked who was in the Boating Safety Zodiac boat and why it was in Anatahan. Aldan said he does not know as it’s not indicated in the log. He said he has no knowledge that if it was a fishing trip or a hunting trip for the governor and his brothers.

Propst said it appears that many of the entries in the Boating Safety logbook are attributed to the governor’s and his families’ fishing or hunting expeditions.

“Does Boating Safety also monitor other fishermen as they do for the governor, or just specially for the governor?” the lawmaker asked. Aldan said they also monitor other fishermen.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the hearing at 4pm., Aldan was still testifying.

CNMI

From Page 1

in Guam that are hospitalized due to COVID-19. Of that number, 37 are unvaccinated.

CHCC said yesterday that the latest case was identified by travel screening and was confirmed positive through arrival testing on Sept. 28. The individual has since been quarantined and is being actively monitored, and CHCC’s contact tracing team has already begun reaching out to those who were in closest contact with the traveler. CHCC also reported that there are currently no active hospitalizations in the CNMI due to COVID-19.

The Guam JIC report stated the three latest COVID-19-related deaths occurred between Sept. 26 and 28.

The 193rd COVID-19-related death was an unvaccinated 16-year-old male with underlying health conditions. He tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 26 and was pronounced dead at the Guam Regional Medical City on Sept. 26.

The 194th COVID-19-related death was a fully vaccinated 43-year-old female with underlying health conditions. She tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 18 and was pronounced dead at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on Sept. 26.

The 195th COVID-19-related death was an unvaccinated 71-year-old male with underlying health conditions. He tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 28 and was pronounced dead at GRMC on Sept. 28.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero offered her deepest condolences to the families of the three individuals and said that for all who have lost loved ones to COVID-19, the best way to honor their memories is through “continued vigilance.”

“The passing of a loved one is never easy and [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio] and I offer our deepest condolences and sympathies to their families during this most difficult time. To all those who have lost someone to this virus, keep their memories close in your hearts and honor them through continued vigilance,” said Leon Guerrero.

CCC

From Page 1

At the CCC board meeting yesterday at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai, Yeom said the first two complaints are over the two enforcement actions for non-payment of annual license fee for 2020, and non-compliance with working capital for three months of payroll. Yeom said IPI has been given 15 days or until Oct. 2, 2021, to respond to the two complaints.

He said the two other complaints are over the two other enforcement actions for non-payment of regulatory fee for 2020, and for non-payment of the license fee that was due on Aug. 12, 2021. Yeom said IPI has been given 15 days or until Oct. 13, 2021, to respond to the two complaints.

Yeom said it’s been over five months since CCC issued the final order suspending IPI’s license for numerous violations related to the two cases that consolidated the four enforcement actions.

“Unfortunately, the very violations that triggered the suspension are still mounting while IPI has done nothing to indicate any willingness to come into compliance with the aforementioned final order,” Yeom said.

Last April 22, the CCC board ordered the indefinite suspension of IPI’s gaming license. The same order directed IPI to pay $6.6 million in total penalty within six months, and pay immediately $15.5 million and $3.1 million in annual casino exclusive license fee and annual casino regulatory fee, respectively. IPI is appealing the order before the Superior Court.

Yeom said yesterday that all of IPI’s violations are major in nature, therefore the four complaints are seeking revocation of the casino license.

Unless IPI comes into compliance, Yeom said, there will be a few more critical enforcement actions to be filed this October, all of which are major violations in nature.

“To this point, we have taken each careful step to give IPI the full due process in accordance with our law, hoping for IPI to come into compliance, but to no avail,” he said.

Therefore, the executive director said, it is time that CCC moves forward with these final steps carefully but swiftly as possible.

In the four complaints, Blaise asked the CCC board to declare that IPI committed the violations alleged in the complaints and that IPI did not immediately self-report to the CCC the facts that gave rise to the violations prior to being contacted by the CCC’s enforcement staff.

Blaise requested the CCC board to declare that the violations committed by IPI are major offenses pursuant to CCC regulation.

She asked the board to declare that IPI’s failure to pay the annual license fee and annual casino regulatory fee in full when due amounts to an unsuitable method of operation, and requiring IPI to pay the fees immediately upon the effective date of the CCC’s order.

Blaise asked the board to declare that IPI’s license to conduct gaming operations on Saipan be immediately revoked and terminated as disciplinary action in accordance with the CCC regulations.

She asked the board to order IPI to pay a fine of $50,000 per violation per day the annual license fee and annual casino regulatory fee went unpaid for the major violations.

MARCIANO

From Page 1

heads the Consular Office of Japan on Saipan, presented Marciano with the award during a reception at Kevin’s Prime Rib & Seafood at Aqua Resort Club Saipan.

Ono said the award recognizes Marciano’s many achievements in his 30 years at Pacific Development Inc., where he “put in a great effort to attract Japanese tourists, [aided in the] recovery and repatriation of Japanese war dead and [assisted] with many peace memorial services,” including a service that was held in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Ono added that Marciano, alongside Gary Sword at the KKMP radio station, “introduced the history and strong relationship between Japan and the CNMI” to its listeners, as well as provided vital information to the local community, Japanese residents included, during the devastating periods that followed super typhoons Soudelor and Yutu.

Marciano has been part of PDI from 1991 to the present, starting as a public relations specialist to now being PDI’s managing director.

In remarks after receiving the award, Marciano said he has many people to thank and that it took a community effort to bring out the CNMI’s culture through stories told. “Please join me as I dedicate [this award] to everyone who’s not here. There’s so many to thank, and so many others out there in the community that opened up their books for us to ensure that we bring out the quality [of our culture] and ensure that we always share our culture. …I share this dedication to all of you that’s here because this is our story,” said Marciano.

The Japan Foreign Minister’s Commendation Award, which was established in 1984, is awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields, in order to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas. This year, 177 individuals and 41 groups received the award worldwide.

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SALE PRICE
$2.19

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33 new citizens sworn in, join American family

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, second from left, poses with the new citizens and Dr. Jonathan Liwag after yesterday's swearing in ceremonies at the U.S. Courthouse. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The U.S District Court for the NMI swore in 33 new U.S citizens yesterday during a two-part naturalization ceremony.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona led both swearing in ceremonies yesterday for the new citizens. The ceremonies were divided in two in able to follow COVID-19 safety protocols.

The first batch of naturalized citizens include Aileen Mendoza Agana, Momrej Bhuiyan, Edelina Herrera Borja, Giselle Adlawan Butalid, Ponciano Pascua Corotan, Elisa Mariquit Cuaresma, Joselito Narag Golingo, Alexander Sison Gozon, Elizabeth Sanchez Gozon, Zenaida Degracia Hernandez, Hyung Jin Kim, Francia Copino Manait, Adelita Hayagan Molina, Femie Yesca Rey, Kyeong Hee Seo, Alexander Vekhov, Lolita Endaya Velasco, and Zhanru Yin.

The second batch of naturalized citizens were Donna Marie Ada, Bruno Garillo Alvarez, Gemma Buetizon Babauta, Shuji Li Chang, Eva Guerrero, Genoveva Hocog, Mingshun Norita, Donald Power, Rhose Ann Joy Caluya Prado, Janet Agra Sablan, Josephine Larot Santos, Ruby Santos, Angelo Sebio, and Cheng Shao.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jonathan Liwag, who is the U.S. District Court for the NMI's Information Technology security officer, served as both ceremony's guest speaker where he inspired his fellow naturalized citizens to love and protect the country they have sworn their allegiance to while continuing to enrich it with their cultures.

"I was not born a citizen of this country. But I came to Saipan when I was very young and learned the principles and values of being an American. As a young boy, I joined the Boy Scouts of America. I recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and the words were etched in my memory. I experienced firsthand the concepts of liberty even before I knew anything about immigration and laws. We did not leave everything behind; we also brought with us our cultures that enrich this society. You have come all this way and made this country your home, so you must protect it. You have sworn allegiance to protect our way of life," he said.

Liwag also encouraged them to carry out their new civic duties. "There are other ways to serve this nation; one is doing our civic duty, such as voting and jury service," he said.

Liwag left the group with a quote by Judge William F. Kuntz, a U.S. District Court Judge, to remind them that the contributions of people like them are what makes the United States such a powerful country" "'We are a beautiful substantive and powerful nation because of what you have contributed and because of what you will contribute.' Once again, congratulations, my fellow Americans," he said.

BECQ sets Sugar Dock cleanup

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality Cleanup Brigade will be at it again, picking up trash at Sugar Dock on Oct. 2, 2021, from 8:30am to 10am.

If you would like to volunteer, meet the BECQ representatives on Saturday at the pavilion behind Town House at 8am. Volunteers will split into groups and clean until 10:30am.

Come and join BECQ's monthly beach cleanup and "pick it up!" Let us work together for the beauty of our islands, health of our coral reefs and cleanliness of our beaches for everyone to enjoy safely. Let's control the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask to the cleanup event.

For more information about volunteering, contact the BECQ office at 664-8500/1. ***(PR)***

SEA TURTLES
Sea turtles are important for our islands and environment! They maintain the health of sea grass beds and coral reefs. Sea turtles balance marine food webs by controlling prey populations. Lastly, turtles boost tourism and the economy through marine recreational activities.
Unfortunately, due to decades of intense hunting, sea turtle populations are only a fraction of their historic abundance. Only 12 female turtles return to CNMI to nest every year and this number keeps declining!
Sea turtles are protected by local and federal laws. It is our responsibility to protect and give populations time to recover. Sea turtles provided for us in the past and now depend on us for their survival.
SAVE TURTLES!
REPORT VIOLATIONS & TURTLE EMERGENCIES: 670-287-8537
Calls are completely anonymous, our hotline is open 24 hours a day.

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 *et seq.*, as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on September 30, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes from June 11, 2021

II. Public Comment (s)

III. Committee Reports
a. Committee on Awards
b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/ Forbearance
c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
d. Committee on Program and Development
e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative, and Community Affairs

IV. Administrator's Report

V. Chairman's Report

VI. Old Business
1. Election/reorganization of committee officers

VII. New Business
1. Fall 2021 application status
2. Loans repayment/collections

VIII. Executive Session

IX. Miscellaneous Matters

X. Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

/s/ Oscar M. Babauta,
Chairman, Board of SHEFA Directors

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Adoption of Minutes
1. September 1, 2021 – Regular Meeting
2. September 18, 2021 – Special Meeting

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS[1]

III. REPORTS
a. Chair's Report
b. Executive Director's Report

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
a. Casino Service Industry
1) Matsui Asia, Limited
2) United States Playing Card Company

V. NEW BUSINESS
a. Casino License
1) Alter City Group, Inc.
2) Tinian Entertainment Company

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION[2]

VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS
a. Bridge Investment Group's Appeal

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

[1] Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Public invited to the Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation signing

Members of the community are invited to attend the upcoming Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation signing ceremony that will be held at 10am on Monday, Oct. 4, 2021, at Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

The ceremony, which will be hosted by the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence and other community partners, will recognize the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the CNMI. This year's theme for the CNMI is "Healing Forward."

The event will also feature the presentation of the annual Bridge of Light Award. The recipient is nominated and chosen based on their accomplishments and/or efforts to end domestic violence and sexual assault, and to be a "Bridge of Light" for victims and survivors in the CNMI. This year's award sponsors include Bridge Capital, IT&E, and the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

Community members are also invited to take part in other DVAM events, including the upcoming DVAM Handwaving on Rota on Friday, Oct. 1, 2021, that will begin at 3:30pm in the area between Teteto and Guata.

Next, the DVAM Day of Prayer will be on Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021, with various faith-based organizations pledging to spend this day talking with their congregation about domestic violence and supporting victims and survivors. Confirmed organizations include Cornerstone Christian Church, Grace Christian Academy, and Mount Carmel Cathedral, which will have DVAM organizers participating in their Mass at 9am.

The next event is the Purple Wave, Walk & Roll Against Domestic Violence on Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021, at the NMI Museum. The event will open with registration at 4:30pm along with poster-making activities. The roadside waving will start after 5pm followed by the Walk & Roll. Registrants will also receive free DVAM T-shirts, while supplies last.

Right after the Walk & Roll will be the Candlelight Vigil for Victims of Domestic Violence at 6:30pm at the NMI Museum. This purpose of this event is to light a candle to remember and grieve those we lost to domestic violence.

The next event is the Light of Unity at 5:30pm on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021, at the Tun Kindo' Baseball Field on Rota. This event will have the community "light up" the baseball field to honor victims and survivors, and acknowledge those still living with domestic violence.

There will also be discussions with a variety of guest speakers on topics related to domestic violence on KKMP 92.1 FM starting at 8am on Thursday, Sept. 30 and then every Wednesday at 8am in October.

For more information, contact NMCADSV at (670) 234-3878 or email info@endviolencenmi.org. For more updates on DVAM events and activities, follow NMCADSV on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@endviolencenmi). ***(PR)***

MVA looks at implementing self-care leave

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority is right now looking at following the Commonwealth Ports Authority's lead and the possibility of implementing a new self-care leave policy as early as next year.

During the MVA's special board meeting Tuesday, MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo proposed the possibility of implementing a self-care leave program similar to CPA's.

Iakopo

"We saw in the paper that CPA had definitely adopted this self-care leave, to cope with stress and [to take care of] our state of mind. Not just that, it's also [about] productivity and just overall job satisfaction and we really like the idea that CPA has taken the initiative to push this forward," Iakopo said.

"Management has looked into this. We actually sought CPA's assistance if they could share their self-care leave program with us, and from what I know is that its employees accrue eight hours of self-care leave for the first day of each quarter. So, it looks like you'll get four self-care leaves within the fiscal year. I just wanted to propose this to the board if this is something that you can consider for MVA," she added.

Iakopo said in her presentation that self-care leave would benefit the MVA staff because not only are they spread thin, but MVA events usually last days at a time and MVA staff work tirelessly to ensure that these events run smoothly.

"Our management and staff work tirelessly, whether that is through events and now the [Tourism Resumption Investment Plan]. Not to mention the limited staffing that we have," she said.

MVA board member Marian Aldan-Pierce raised a concern, though, about the fiscal impact a new self-care leave program could have on the budget. "How are we going to be able to sustain the self-care leave. That's for additional days that we have to pay for," she asked.

MVA board chair Viola Alepuyo said management has looked into the financial impact the program could have but she deferred the discussion to an executive session to discuss the specifics.

Torres reappoints Hocog to CEDA board

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres has re-nominated Aubry M. Hocog to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority board of directors.

Torres forwarded last week to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider Hocog's résumé, police clearance, statement of financial interest, drug test receipt, and sealed drug result, in compliance with the requirement of the Senate Standing Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations.

Torres said he and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios look forward to the Senate's favorable action on Hocog's renomination to serve to the CEDA board.

Hocog

CEDA is the former Commonwealth Development Authority.

Hocog represents Rota on the CEDA board. She has been the acting board chair since September 2020. She is also a board member of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. representing CEDA. She is a special assistant for programs and grants for the Municipality of Rota from June 2015 to the present.

Meanwhile, Torres has also renominated Joaquin Q. Dela Cruz as a member of the CEDA board.

Dela Cruz has been a member of the board representing Saipan since June 2020.

Dela Cruz has been the marketing and escrow officer at Pacific American Title Insurance since November 2006.

Last June, Torres signed into law a bill that renames CDA as CEDA and tasks it with the duty of promoting the CNMI as an investment destination in a bid to diversity its economy. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Labor

Office of the Secretary
1356 Mednilla Avenue | Capitol Hill, P.O. Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-3196 | Web: www.marianaslabor.net

NOTICE TO EMPLOYERS

In accordance with Employment Rules and Regulations of the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC), the CNMI Department of Labor (CNMI DOL) mandates compliance of the following for all eligible private sector employers. Failure or refusal to comply is cause for CNMI DOL to issue a Notice of Violation to the employer which may result in fines and other sanctions following a due process hearing in the Administrative Hearing Office.

1. Post Job Vacancy Announcement (JVA) on CNMI DOL website
An employer who intends to employ a foreign national worker, transitional worker, or nonimmigrant alien on a full-time basis (under any new employment arrangement, any renewal of any existing employment arrangement, or any transfer) must post a Job Vacancy Announcement (JVA) on the CNMI DOL website at www.marianaslabor.net. NMIAC § 80-20.1-225(a). No waiver is available for the job vacancy announcement requirement. NMIAC § 80-20.1-225(e).

2. Submit Total Workforce Listing
Each business employer ***shall report quarterly***, as of the last day of the calendar quarter, ***the number of employees, job classification, and the hourly wage of employees for whom wages*** were paid during the quarter. NMIAC § 80-20.1-505(b) (emphasis added). The Department requires employers to present this information in a document called "Total Workforce Listing," via email: documents@marianaslabor.net *(Excel format)*.

The Total Workforce Listing is due each quarter:
1st Quarter (January – March).....due on April 30
2nd Quarter (April – June).....due on July 31
3rd Quarter (July – September).....due on October 31
4th Quarter (October - December).....due on January 31

Attention: The Total Workforce Listing for the 3rd Quarter 2021 is due on or before October 31, 2021. Online submissions may be emailed to documents@marianaslabor.net (in Excel format), or delivered to the DOL Administrative Services Office, Building #1356, Capitol Hill, or faxed to (670) 664-3197. Online submissions are preferable.

3. Adhere to Workforce Participation Minimum Percentage Requirement
Any employer, unless exempt, who employs workers on a full-time basis must certify that 30% or more of its full-time employees are U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents, and/or CNMI permanent residents. 3 CMC § 4525 and NMIAC § 80-20.1-210(c)(3). Failure to maintain a minimum percentage of 30% will result in a Notice of Violation filed against the employer.

4. Submit New or Updated Workforce Plan
All employers who employ nonimmigrant alien workers, unless exempt, must submit a new or updated Workforce Plan every twelve months. NMIAC § 80-20.1-510(c). A workforce plan shall identify specific positions currently occupied by a foreign national worker and timetable for accomplishing the replacement of the foreign national worker with qualified U.S. citizens, CNMI permanent residents, and U.S. permanent residents until the workforce participation objective is met. NMIAC § 80-20.1-510(b). *The Workforce Plan form is available on the CNMI DOL website under Forms & Publications at www.marianaslabor.net.*

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS WITH MULTI-ISLAND JOB SITES
An employer with multiple island job sites in any of the Mariana Islands must submit a separate report for each island. For example, if an organization employs workers for job sites in Saipan and Tinian then the employer must file two separate quarterly compliance reports (one for Saipan and another for Tinian).

- Rota employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net ***and*** dolrota@gmail.com OR delivered to the Rota DOL Field Office at Old Rota High School Campus, Liyo Village.
- Tinian employers must email the Total Workforce Listing and Workforce Plan to documents@marianaslabor.net ***and*** tinianlabordepartment@gmail.com OR delivered to the Tinian DOL Field Office at Edu's Plaza, 1st Floor, San Jose Village.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYERS WHOSE OPERATIONS WERE AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Indicate the employment status on the Total Workforce Listing of those employee that are currently on furlough, laid off or working reduce hours as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Ballot reviews lay groundwork for future electoral mischief

An Arizona ballot review designed to validate former President Donald Trump's fake vote-fraud claims from last year's election found that Democrat Joe Biden not only did indeed win that state, but that he won by more than was originally thought. But that's not stopping Republicans in other states from pursuing similarly baseless challenges.

This is actually worse than just an enslaved political party trying to obediently salve the bruised ego of its bombastic leader. By going through the motions of these post-election vote investigations, pretending there's actually something to investigate, Republicans are normalizing this bizarre process of unjustified ballot challenges. This could make it that much easier for them to succeed in overturning valid elections next time—with an assist from the voter suppression schemes that red state legislatures around America are writing into their statutes.

Any discussion of the supposed controversy over vote integrity in the 2020 presidential election must start with one reality-reaffirming statement: There was never any indication of fraud. Everything that Trump and his minions have done in the aftermath—the dozens of doomed lawsuits filed by Trump's lawyers, the attempt by congressional Republicans to overturn the election, the Jan. 6 mob assault on the Capitol, all of it—was based on nothing but Trump's narcissistic refusal to accept the voters' judgment.

But what began as Republicans' pathetic pandering to that narcissism has morphed into a dangerous new partisan strategy that goes beyond Trumpism. Emboldened by how easy it was for Trump to convince much of the right that he won an election he clearly lost, state-level Republicans see an opportunity to counter the demographic challenges they'll face in future elections. The electorate may be getting younger, more diverse and more liberal, none of which bodes well for an ideologically moribund GOP, but Republicans still control a majority of states and the electoral systems in those states.

Thus did Arizona Republicans launch their ill-fated ballot review. As is typical of these reviews, it targeted only a large urban center (Maricopa County), where there are the most Democratic votes. It was conducted by private contractors hand-picked by Republicans. And still, the results only strengthened Biden's victory there.

Despite this ringing defeat for Trump's lie, Texas Republicans are now pursuing similar nonsense, ordering (at Trump's behest) reviews of ballots in four large counties, even though Trump won the state. It's clearly a fishing expedition meant to find something, anything, that could be used to justify overturning future elections. Similar efforts are underway in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

These aren't just partisan sideshows, but an attempt to lay groundwork for a more successful assault on the ballot than Republicans were able to launch last time. Voters of either party who still believe in electoral democracy should purge these institutional vandals from public office—while they still can.

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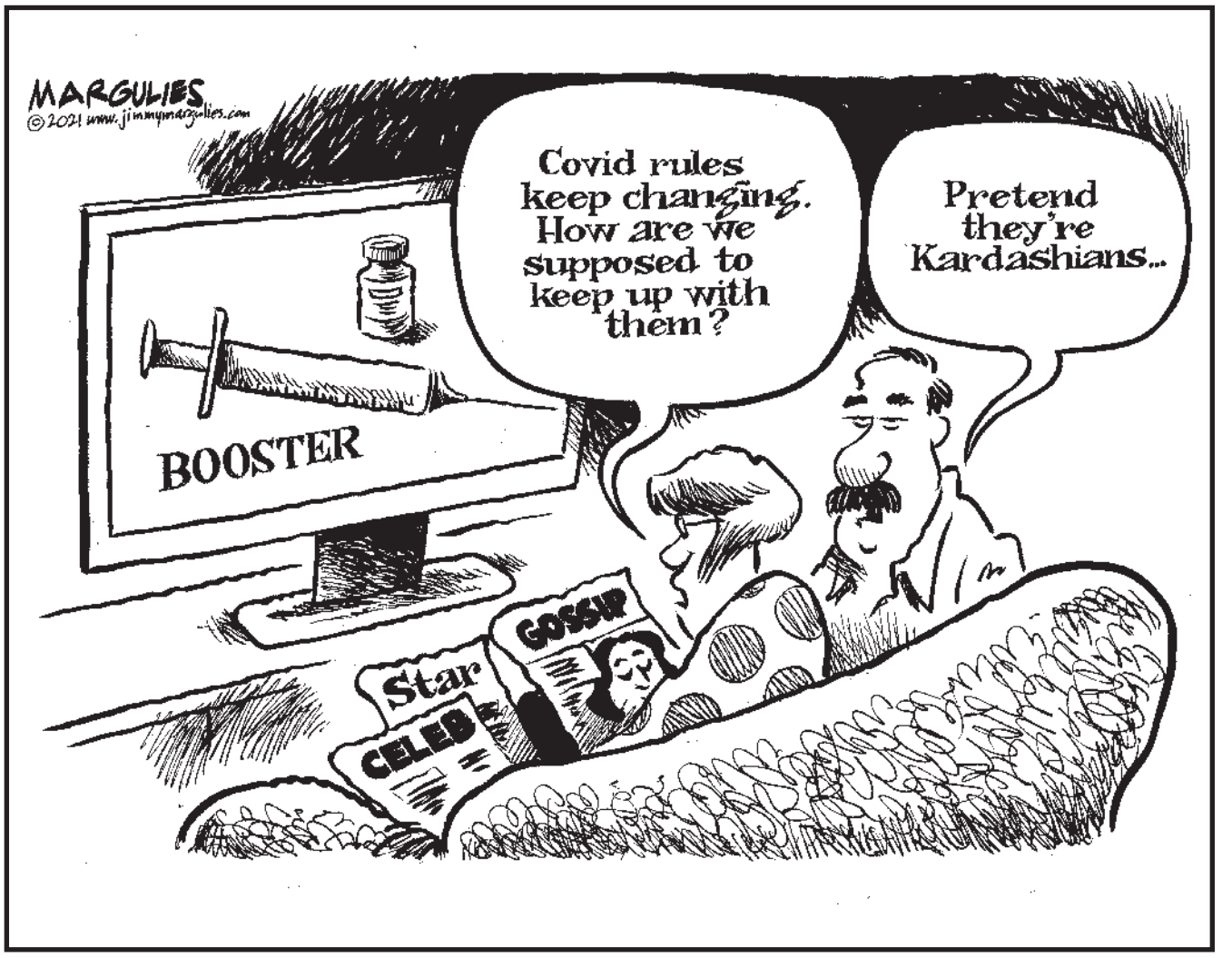


The world needs more COVID vaccines. That gives Biden a chance to lead

By ADAM THIERER
Tribune News Service

Adam Thierer is a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University and author of Evasive Entrepreneurs and the Future of Governance*.*

Against all odds, analog-era media products once left for dead are making miraculous comebacks. For decades, vinyl records, turntables, broadcast TV antennas, and even printed books seemed destined for the dustbin of technological history. Many of us threw away our record collections and antennas and began migrating from physical books to digital ones. Now, these older technologies are enjoying a revival. What explains their resurgence, and what's the lesson?

Vinyl records are enjoying success not seen since Whitney Houston regularly topped the charts. After a rapid decline in the 1980s, sales were almost non-existent in the 1990s. Today, they're selling briskly—up 94% currently over the same period last year—and record stores can't keep up with surging demand. Vinyl topped CD sales for the first time since 1986, despite consumers having to pay twice what they might for CDs or digital downloads.

Broadcast television never really died, but it felt dormant once people began getting their local channels in cable television bundles. Today, however, consumers are "cutting the cord," with more than one-third of U.S. broadband households abandoning cable. Millions are supplementing newer digital streaming services with old-fashioned "rabbit ears" to pick up free local TV. Antenna sales rose 4% over the past year.

Finally, despite predictions of digitized bookshelves bringing about "The End of Books," physical books are selling. According to Publishers Weekly, printed books enjoyed their largest annual increase since 2005, with sales up 8.2% last year over 2019. The total number sold (751 million) was the highest since 2009, "the year before e-books started to become a meaningful part of the book business."

There seem to be a few reasons for the dramatic revival of these technologies:

With vinyl records and printed books, people enjoy making a physical connection with the art they love. They want to hold it in their hands, display it on their wall, and show it off to their friends. Digital music or books don't satisfy that desire, no matter how much more convenient and affordable they might be. The mediums still matter.

With broadcast antennas, the novelty of being able to capture "free" television (and radio) has returned in an age of metered media. Millennials are too young to recall over-the-air broadcasting as the norm, and they're experiencing a bit of the same wonder as older generations who first affixed antennas to their homes and accessed signals from towers miles away without charge. It also helps keep media budgets in check.

Other analog-era media technologies seem dead and buried, however. Perhaps I may eat these words, but VHS tapes and video rental stores are probably a thing of the past. The streaming revolution has made great movies and television abundant and instantly accessible. Phonebooths and rotary-dial phones are also unlikely to pop up outside of museums going forward.

Likewise, 8-track tapes from the 1970s and cassette "boom boxes" of the 1980s are unlikely to experience a renewal because they were never high-quality, portable music solutions. Vinyl records and turntables are mostly enjoyed at home for a rich listening experience, and portable digital music fills the other gaps quite nicely.

These are not the first technologies to experience a back-from-the-dead rebirth. Before the turn of the 20th century, electric vehicles were quite popular. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that by 1900, they made up around one-third of all vehicles on the road, and New York City had a fleet of more than 60 electric taxis. The internal combustion engine and cheap gasoline spelled apparent doom for electric cars, even if they were quieter and more environmentally friendly.

Of course, electric cars are experiencing a major comeback precisely for that reason. Some government mandates are accelerating their return, but it seems clear that they were destined to rise again.

It's uncertain which other old technologies will get a second chance, but the next time someone tells you it's time to throw away your old favorite things, consider holding on just a little longer. It's hard to predict the future and part of the beauty of our economic system is that consumers know the value of things prognosticators have written off.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

As unvaccinated COVID-19 patients overwhelm ERs, hospitals ration care

By DIANA C. SCHRAMM
The Baltimore Sun

Dear "Personal Choicers,"

As long as unvaccinated people provide a significant breeding ground for COVID-19 virus variants, medical care for those seriously ill with coronavirus will be diminished. Rationing hospital patient admissions has become urgently necessary because of depleted staff and limitations of space and equipment.

As the daughter of a doctor and the mother of one, as well as the wife of a research neurophysiologist, I well understand the reasons for this. I don't think you do, however. Please allow me to explain.

Several thousand front-line nurses, doctors and other health care workers died in the first surge of COVID-19, so there were fewer left to care for the incoming ill. Most of those who survived are now vaccinated against the virus, but they may have to quarantine from time to time when testing shows they may be carrying the virus. That leaves even fewer medical workers to share the load as another surge of unvaccinated, seriously sick patients emerges.

You cannot train someone overnight to handle the complicated procedures of respiratory care; it takes nearly one specialist per patient, possibly for a long time. Meanwhile, a backlog of patients is growing and overwhelming emergency rooms that are not built, nor staffed, to handle the continuous onslaught of highly contagious patients threatening to infect others.

There is less room to isolate those who seek care for non-COVID reasons, and fewer medical staff to diagnose and pass them on to other departments, such as cardiology and surgery. (Some doctors from those departments volunteered to help deliver E.R. care, so there are fewer of them available to deliver specialized care.)

Because you, the unvaccinated, also tend to deny your COVID-19 illness until you are seriously ill, more of you die in the E.R. while waiting for specialist care. In the meantime, you tie up the attention and emotions of the emergency staff, who take the place of your family; each of your deaths weighs on the caretakers.

Moreover, the surges from those who choose to remain unvaccinated mean emergency staff no longer have downtime during their shifts to keep themselves healthy and on an even keel. Working 8- or 12-hour shifts for a second year, they are suffering from exhaustion and burnout. Nurses and doctors are leaving "in droves," I'm told (some go to private practices that select their patients). So there are fewer of them to give hospital emergency care when you need it.

Those hospitals that failed to ration filled beyond capacity with patients for whom they eventually didn't have enough nurses, doctors or special equipment. They simply closed their doors, turning away people with heart attacks, inflamed gall bladders and appendixes, broken bones and so on, along with even more people suffering from COVID-19.

Some hospitals have been quietly selecting (rationing) their patients all along. Some emergency capacity is reserved for that 8-year-old who breaks an arm, can be "fixed" and sent home so that emergency care becomes quickly available again. Respiratory specialist capacity is reserved for those who are most "likely to live," and other specialist attention and space is held for non COVID-19 emergencies.

Rationing admissions is the consequence of the surge from unvaccinated, seriously ill people who gambled with their health and are depleting our hospital resources. Experience has taught hospitals that they must ration their services, deciding who is admitted and who is turned away—necessary decisions, but horribly difficult for all concerned.

This is what rationed admissions might mean for you:

If you're feeling lucky and stay home, don't entertain guests and get your necessities delivered, you might avoid the virus. But many of you aren't the social distancing type.

And, unfortunately, if you join the hordes of the unlucky gamblers, choking from a COVID-19 infection trying desperately to breathe, you may not be admitted to a hospital because you are too sick. A judgment may be made that your chances of survival are not good and you won't be allowed to use up limited medical attention for weeks, blocking those who can be saved. Maybe the ambulance can take you home.

This is your choice.

Diana C. Schramm is vaccinated in Baltimore.

Help families put their health first: Pass paid leave

By SALLY GOZA
American Academy of Pediatrics

Dr. Sally Goza is a pediatrician in Georgia and the immediate past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Impossible choices. That's what comes to mind when I think of far too many of the families that I care for as a pediatrician based in Georgia—the impossible choices they need to make, far too often, to simply get through the day and start the next feeling as strong and resilient as possible.

I also was serving as president of the American Academy of Pediatrics last year when COVID-19 changed the world. I was worried for families everywhere and how the pandemic upended lives in ways we hadn't seen before.

Today, I think of my patients and their families who have faced insurmountable challenges because of the pandemic, and how after more than a year, are still waking up to face much of the same stress and painful uncertainty.

I think of the parents who were essential workers and needed to scramble, without missing a beat, to try to find some way to find care for their children when schools went virtual. The families with children with complex health care needs who need to choose between getting to a doctor's appointment or going to work to get a paycheck. The mother who needs to take time off from work due to complications with pregnancy and hopes it doesn't impact her ability to get paid work hours after the baby is born.

These are dilemmas that no one should have to face. Health and well-being should always come first, but sadly, parents, families and caregivers are too often forced to prioritize ways to ensure they can support their families financially and make sure there is food on the table or a roof over their heads.

That is why our country needs comprehensive medical and family leave policy—and now is the time for our policymakers to act.

As a pediatrician, I not only have stories that illustrate what paid leave would mean for my patients' families, but I also understand the science behind why it's so beneficial to the health of our children, communities and even our country.

During the first few weeks of life, it is critical that parents have the time to form a secure, healthy attachment with their child. This builds the foundation for strong relationships in the future that are important for a child's lifelong health and well-being. Paid leave helps make sure that families can prioritize caring for their baby without having to sacrifice their paycheck.

Paid leave also offers families peace of mind and keeps them strong. If a parent is unexpectedly unable to work because they are sick or injured, or because they need to care for a relative, paid leave can help prevent the family from experiencing poverty and food insecurity.

Strong families create strong communities, which create a strong and prosperous country.

We also know that current access to paid leave is not equitable. It is lower among lower-income families, and when it comes to parental leave—only 41% of Black women and 33% of Hispanic women have access to it, while around half of white women do.

We must address these inequities and pass universal paid medical and family leave.

Our lawmakers have a key opportunity to make a huge difference for families. Passing a comprehensive policy with 12 weeks for caregiving and medical leave will provide the support that patients and families like those I see in my office so desperately need right now.

Let's not miss this opportunity to do what is right for children and families. Let's make sure families can always put their health and well-being first.

Emmys for everyone (who can climb stairs)

By MIKE ERVIN
Progressive Perspectives

Mike Ervin is a writer and disability rights activist living in Chicago. This column was produced for The Progressive *magazine and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

This year, for the first time ever, I was eager to watch the Emmy Awards ceremony. I didn't know or care who was nominated or who won. But I was interested because James LeBrecht, a guy who uses a wheelchair, gave the event's producers a real hard time for not making the stage truly wheelchair accessible. LeBrecht co-directed the film "Crip Camp," which was nominated for an Oscar this year for best documentary feature.

You know how those ceremonies go. The big dramatic moment is when the winner is announced and that person makes the triumphant walk to the stage to accept their award and deliver their speech. That walk always includes scaling some stairs.

Early in September, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund sent a letter to the producers of the Emmy Awards on LeBrecht's behalf, informing them that not having a ramp leading from the audience area to the stage violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The letter said that when LeBrecht complained to the producers this spring, he was told that anyone who couldn't climb stairs could access the stage from backstage. Or a microphone could be brought into the audience area to any award winner who wished to speak. But, the letter noted, "neither approach complies with the ADA, and each conveys disrespect and exclusion. Separate is never equal."

This disregard for the ADA was particularly egregious, the letter continued, because this year's Emmys ceremony was held in a makeshift venue constructed just for the event to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

I was delighted to hear that LeBrecht was making a big deal about this. Stage access is a requirement of the ADA that I've seen routinely ignored.

The ADA was signed into law 31 years ago, and since then I've been to a lot of performance venues with newly constructed stages that are only accessible by stairs. This burns me up because it relegates disabled people to being mere spectators. The notion that we would have anything important enough to say for us to be stage worthy is seen as too silly to be taken seriously. Thus, a ramp to the stage, especially one that's in plain sight, is rejected as a superfluous, burdensome eyesore.

Shortly after the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund's letter was sent, LeBrecht reported that the producers assured him that the stage would indeed include a ramp from the audience as part of the stage design. This was a great development because the millions of people watching the broadcast would see the ramp, which could go a long way toward stomping out the belief that disabled people don't belong on life's stages.

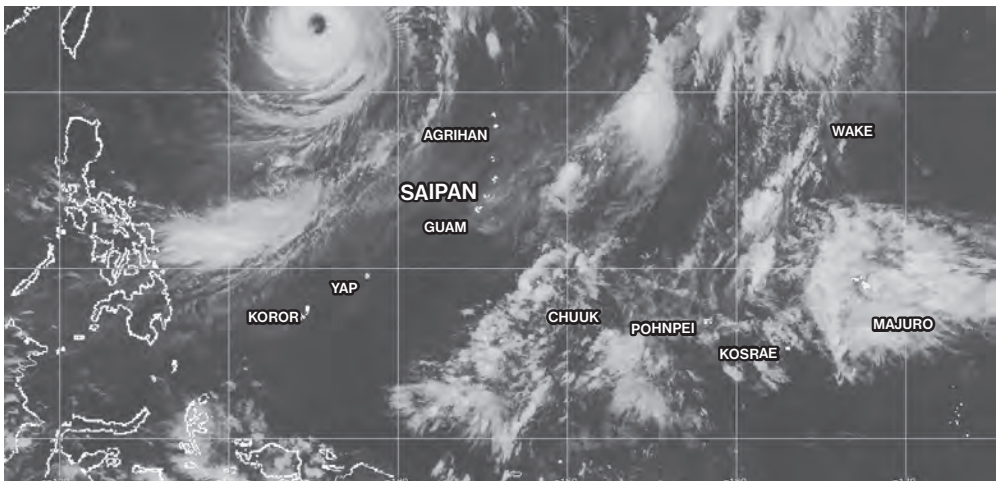
But when the broadcast aired on Sept. 19, there was no obvious ramp. There was a discreet ramp off to the side, but it was hardly noticeable. In an interview with Variety, LeBrecht said he was "furious," noting that the point of having an obvious ramp was for the producers "to show that we want people with disabilities to participate."

Yep, the producers had a golden opportunity to truly celebrate the ADA and all that it stands for. But their grudging, minimalist compliance reinforced the message that if you can't climb stairs, you don't belong on stage.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon. Light and variable winds. Highs around 88. Chance of showers 20 percent.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph. Lows around 77. highs around 86.chance of showers 30 percent.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 70s. Highs in the upper 80s. Chance of showers 30 percent.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Lows in the upper 70s. Highs in the upper 80s. Chance of showers 30 percent.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 80s. Lows in the upper 70s. Chance of showers 20 percent.
86º 77º	86º 77º	86º 77º	80º 70º	80º 70º



PICTURE TIME: 7:24 AM, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mostly high clouds are seen across the Marianas this morning. Showers are light and spotty. Gentle winds prevail across the region. Altimetry shows seas mainly between 6 and 8 feet, with the higher seas over northern waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly cloudy	86 / 79 °F
Palau	Mostly cloudy	88 / 79 °F
Yap	Partly cloudy	89 / 79 °F
Chuuk	Cloudy	89 / 79 °F
Pohnpei	Cloudy	90 / 77 °F
Kosrae	Mostly cloudy	89 / 78 °F
Majuro	Cloudy	81 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:05 PM
Saturday	6:06 AM	6:04 PM
Sunday	6:07 AM	6:04 PM
Monday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:07 AM	1:34 PM	-
Friday	1:00 AM	2:24 PM	-
Saturday	2:50 AM	3:11 PM	-
Sunday	2:50 AM	3:56 PM	-
Monday	3:46 AM	4:39 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	60 / 53 °F
Beijing	Fair	80 / 61 °F
Hong Kong	Fair	90 / 82 °F
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	79 / 74 °F
London	Partly Cloudy	58 / 45 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	63 / 59 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	89 / 80 °F
Melbourne	Cloudy	65 / 55 °F
Miami	Clear	81 / 75 °F
New York	Clear	64 / 56 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	85 / 71 °F
Paris	Mostly cloudy	62 / 44 °F
Busan	Mostly cloudy	82 / 72 °F
Rome	Fair	83 / 63 °F
Salem	Clear	67 / 64 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59 / 74 °F
Seoul	Rain	71 / 59 °F
Tokyo	Mostly cloudy	78 / 67 °F
Washington, DC	Fair	71 / 56 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:16 AM	High Tide	1.41
8:20 AM	Low Tide	0.21
4:29 PM	High Tide	1.63
10:01 PM	Low Tide	1.24

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:45am	7:25am	1, 3, 6
UA117	9:45am	10:25am	2, 4, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:05pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:45am	9:10pm	1, 3, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	9:10pm	4, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:00am	5:41am	1, 3, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:41am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	3:55am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:41am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	5:41am+1	7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:41am+1	1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

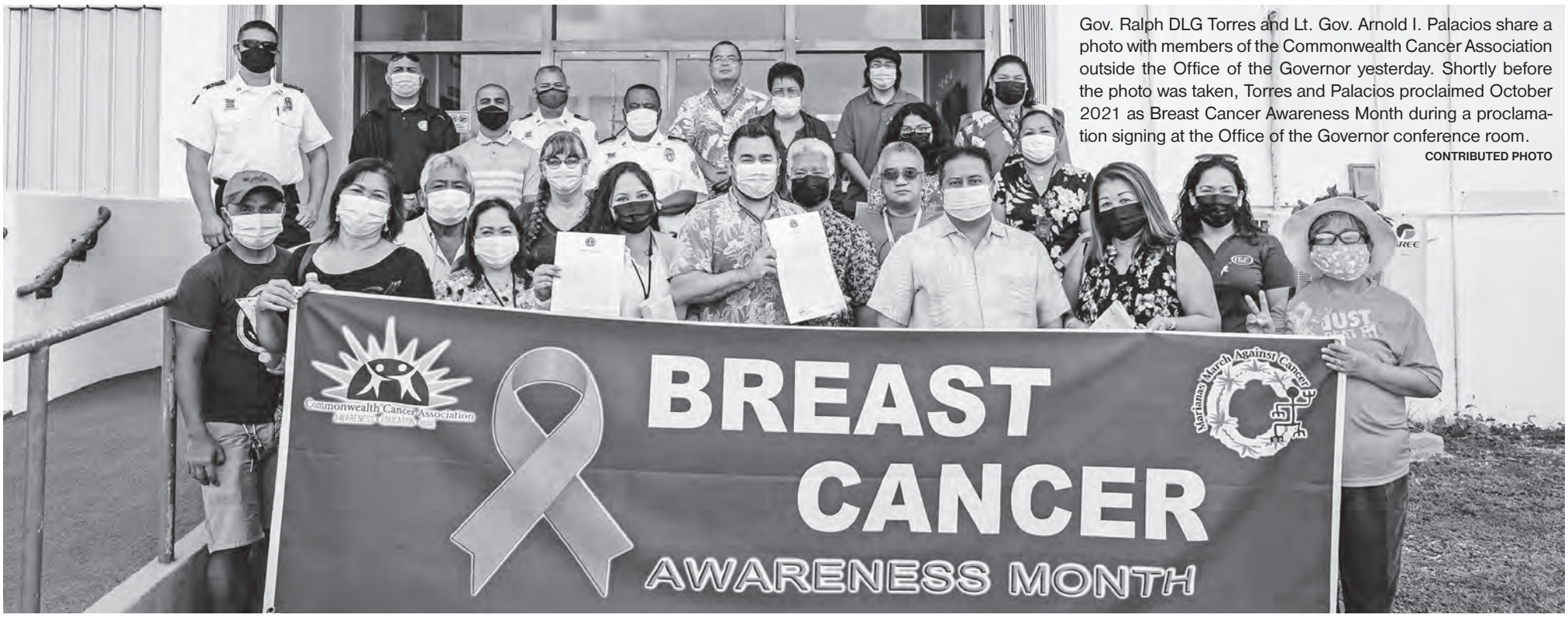
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable



Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios share a photo with members of the Commonwealth Cancer Association outside the Office of the Governor yesterday. Shortly before the photo was taken, Torres and Palacios proclaimed October 2021 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month during a proclamation signing at the Office of the Governor conference room.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

October is CNMI Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nationally, breast cancer is the second leading cause of death in women, behind lung cancer, and the chance of a woman developing invasive breast cancer at some point in their life is about 1 in 8. The National Cancer Institute predicts that it will see an estimated 232,340 new cases of breast cancer this year and that 36,620 women will die from the disease this year.

These and other sobering facts were shared Tuesday during the designation of October this year as CNMI Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios signing the proclamation document at the Office of the Governor conference room.

The proclamation urges women aged 20-years-old and older to speak with their healthcare providers about clinical breast exams and to also perform breast self-examinations. It was also learned that "lifestyle factors contribute significantly to the risk of developing breast cancer, as well as most cancers." Torres and Palacios encourage women to educate themselves and explore the ways in which they can decrease their risk for breast cancer.

"We urge all women in the CNMI to discuss a preventive and screening program with their health care provider and become aware of potential risks of being diagnosed for breast cancer. Let's continue to provide support for our survivors, their families, and our healthcare and community partners so that we can provide preventative care, decrease the risk for breast cancer, and promote a healthy lifestyle," said Torres, shortly before signing the proclamation.

Faith, Hope and KARIDAT

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

FAMILY SERVICES CASE MANAGER

For more information, job description and an application visit the Karidat main office at Sister Remedios Community Center, Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: Complete application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021 AT 4:00 PM

Lizama bill seeks to allow old right-hand drive vehicles

Rep. Richard T. Lizama (D-Saipan) has introduced a bill that seeks to allow for right-hand drive vehicles that are 25 years or older to be imported and registered in the CNMI.

Lizama

Lizama pointed out that most U.S. states allow for importation and registration of RHD vehicles, some with stipulations regarding use, but largely recognizing the federal allowances for such vehicles. He said Guam has many RHD vehicles and is enjoying the benefit and practicality of such vehicles for island use. The lawmaker said the CNMI falls under the same federal stipulation for federal funding regarding its traffic programs and grants as Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico.

"If these territories have experienced no losses to its funding for recognizing the federal regulations on these vehicles, it stands to reason that the CNMI would be under the same allowances," Lizama said.

Right now, importing right-hand drive vehicles into the CMMI is prohibited unless the vehicle legally entered the Commonwealth prior to Dec 30, 1991, or if the vehicle's primary use is for agricultural or construction. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB21-CHCC/IT-003
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 18, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
"SWITCHES FOR CHCC INTERFACILITY NETWORK UPGRADE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITAITON TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-SOC-003
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 18, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
"ROTA OFFICE LEASE"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CEDA
COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950 | Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 | Fax: (670) 235-7147 | www.developcnmi.com

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, October 1, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

Business

Yellen warns delay in raising debt limit will slow economy

WASHINGTON (AP)—Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen sounded an urgent call Tuesday for Congress to raise the government's borrowing limit, a day after Senate Republicans blocked consideration of a bill that would have done so.

If the debt limit isn't raised by Oct. 18, Yellen warned, "the full faith and credit of the United States would be impaired, and our country would likely face a financial crisis and economic recession." Yellen testified before the Senate Banking Committee at a hearing to update Congress on the impact of the vast financial support programs the government enacted during the pandemic.

Yellen

Yellen also said that a failure to raise the debt ceiling would likely send interest rates higher and swell the government's interest payments on the national debt.

"And the interest payments of ordinary Americans on their mortgages and on their cars and on their credit cards would go up," she said.

■ ■ ■ ■

WASHINGTON (AP)—In remarks before the National Association for Business Economists, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called on Congress to support the Biden administration's $3.5 trillion "Build Back Better" initiative that would expand the social safety net and attack climate change. She also urged support for a $1 trillion bipartisan bill to address more traditional infrastructure, such as roads and bridges.

Yellen said Tuesday that President Joe Biden's spending proposals will address long-overdue U.S. infrastructure needs and prepare the country to meet future challenges.

"The investments in the president's agenda would be a sweeping overhaul of our national infrastructure," Yellen said.

She listed among the improvements a new electric grid and power structure, new passenger and freight rail systems, as well as fixes for roads and bridges that she have been "in disrepair and unsafe for decades." She also listed broadband, new schools, clean drinking water and environmental remediation steps to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

■ ■ ■ ■

The hearing also included a strong denunciation of Fed Chair Jerome Powell by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, who said she would oppose Powell's renomination for a second term. Powell's first four-year term ends in February.

The debt limit caps the amount of money the government can borrow. Still, Congress is able to approve new borrowing that exceeds the debt limit, with a vote on raising or suspending the debt limit held separately. In that way, the debt limit is raised to accommodate previous spending and taxing decisions. The limit has been raised or suspended nearly 80 times since 1960. It was suspended three times during the Trump administration.

In a separate letter Yellen sent Tuesday to congressional leaders, she reinforced her assertion that a prolonged battle over raising the limit could imperil the economy.

"Waiting until the last minute," the Treasury secretary wrote, "can cause serious harm to business and consumer confidence, raise borrowing costs for taxpayers, and negatively impact the credit rating of the United States for years to come."

Pfizer vaccine for kids may not be available until November

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pfizer has submitted research to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on the effectiveness of its COVID-19 vaccine in children but the shots may not be available until November.

The company said Tuesday it provided health regulators with data from a recent study of its vaccine in children 5 to 11 years old. Officials had said previously they would file an application with the FDA to authorize use in the coming weeks.

In this Jan. 22, 2021, file photo, a certified medical assistant prepares doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. AP

Once the company files its application, U.S. regulators and public health officials will review the evidence and consult with their advisory committees in public meetings to determine if the shots are safe and effective enough to recommend use.

That process may mean the shots may not be available until closer to Thanksgiving, according to a person familiar with the process but not authorized to discuss it publicly. But it is possible that, depending on how quickly the FDA acts, the shots could become available earlier in November, the person said.

The drugmaker and its partner, Germany's BioNTech, say they expect to request emergency use authorization of their vaccine in children ages 5 to 11 "in the coming weeks." The companies also plan to submit data to the European Medicines Agency and other regulators.

The two-shot Pfizer vaccine is currently available for those 12 and older. An estimated 100 million people in the U.S. have been fully vaccinated with it, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pfizer tested a lower dose of the shots in children. The drugmaker said last week that researchers found the vaccine developed coronavirus-fighting antibody levels in children that were just as strong as those found in teenagers and young adults getting regular-strength doses.

Earlier this month, FDA chief Dr. Peter Marks told the AP that once Pfizer turns over its study results, his agency would evaluate the data "hopefully in a matter of weeks" to decide if the shots are safe and effective enough for younger kids.

Pfizer's updated timetable was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Another U.S. vaccine maker, Moderna, also is studying its shots in elementary school-aged children. Results are expected later in the year.

Nation

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley speaks during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the conclusion of military operations in Afghanistan and plans for future counterterrorism operations, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021, on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

Joint Chiefs chairman calls the Afghan war a 'strategic failure'

WASHINGTON (AP)—The top U.S. military officer called the 20-year war in Afghanistan a "strategic failure" and acknowledged to Congress on Tuesday that he had favored keeping several thousand troops in the country to prevent a collapse of the U.S.-supported Kabul government and a rapid takeover by the Taliban.

Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee pointed to the testimony by Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as evidence that President Joe Biden had been untruthful when, in a television interview last month, he suggested the military had not urged him to keep troops in Afghanistan.

Milley refused to say what advice he gave Biden last spring when Biden was considering whether to comply with an agreement the Trump administration had made with the Taliban to reduce the American troop presence to zero by May 2021, ending a U.S. war that began in October 2001. Testifying alongside Milley, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also refused to reveal his advice to Biden.

Milley told the committee, when pressed, that it had been his personal opinion that at least 2,500 U.S. troops were needed to guard against a collapse of the Kabul government and a return to Taliban rule.

Defying U.S. intelligence assessments, the Afghan government and its U.S.-trained army collapsed in mid-August, allowing the Taliban, which had ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, to capture Kabul with what Milley described as a couple of hundred men on motorcycles, without a shot being fired. That triggered a frantic U.S. effort to evacuate American civilians, Afghan allies and others from Kabul airport.

Gen. Frank McKenzie, who as head of Central Command was overseeing U.S. troops in Afghanistan, said he shared Milley's view that keeping a residual force there could have kept the Kabul government intact.

"I recommended that we maintain 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, and I also recommended early in the fall of 2020 that we maintain 4,500 at that time, those were my personal views," McKenzie said. "I also had a view that the withdrawal of those forces would lead inevitably to the collapse of the Afghan military forces and eventually the Afghan government."

WORLD BRIEFS

Petito's dad: Give same attention to all missing people

NEW YORK (AP)—The family of slain traveler Gabby Petito on Tuesday implored the public and news media to put the same energy into helping find other missing people as they did Petito, a 22-year-old woman who vanished on a cross-country trip with her boyfriend. Petito's parents and stepparents spoke to reporters at a news conference in Bohemia, New York—showing off fresh tattoos based on her designs and mantra "Let it be"—as authorities in Florida continued searching for her boyfriend, Brian Laundrie, who is a person of interest in her disappearance and remains unaccounted for. A lawyer for Petito's family, Richard Stafford, renewed calls for Laundrie to turn himself in and criticized his parents for what he said was a lack of cooperation in the search that turned up Petito's remains. The Laundries released a statement Monday saying they weren't helping him flee. "The Laundries did not help us find Gabby, they sure are not going to help us find Brian," Stafford said. "For Brian, we're asking you to turn yourself in to the FBI or the nearest law enforcement agency."

Maryland newspaper gunman gets more than 5 life prison terms

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP)—Selene San Felice said she often questioned how or why she survived the shooting that left five others dead at a Maryland newspaper. Montana Winters Geimer described the grievous loss she and the community suffered when her mother, longtime local journalist Wendi Winters, was killed in the attack. San Felice and Winters Geimer were among several survivors and relatives of victims of the June 2018 killings at the Capital Gazette newspaper who testified in court Tuesday before a judge sentenced the shooter to more than five life terms without the possibility of parole. "We lost the storyteller of our family, and as a community we lost the storyteller for everyone that is an Annapolitan," Winters Geimer said.

Asia

North Korea says hypersonic missile made a first test flight

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Wednesday it successfully tested a new hypersonic missile it implied was being developed as nuclear capable, as it continues to expand its military capabilities and pressure Washington and Seoul over long-stalled negotiations over its nuclear weapons.

The missile test early Tuesday was North Korea's third round of launches this month and took place shortly before North Korea's U.N. envoy accused the United States of hostility and demanded the Biden administration permanently end joint military exercises with South Korea and the deployment of strategic assets in the region.

A photo published in North Korea's state media showed a missile mounted with a finned, cone-shaped payload soaring into the air amid bright orange flames. The official Korean Central News Agency said the missile during its first flight test met key technical requirements, including launch stability and the maneuverability and flight characteristics of the "detached hypersonic gliding warhead."

AP

This photo provided by the North Korean government shows what North Korea claims to be a new hypersonic missile launched from Toyang-ri, Ryongrim County, Jagang Province, North Korea, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021.

The North's announcement came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries said they detected North Korea firing a missile into its eastern sea. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launch highlighted "the destabilizing impact of (North Korea's) illicit weapons program."

North Korea last week made offers to improve relations with the South if certain conditions are met, apparently returning to its pattern of mixing weapons demonstrations with peace overtures to wrest outside concessions.

Negotiations over its nuclear program have been in a stalemate since February 2019. North Korea has demanded the lifting of U.S.-led sanctions while insisting it has the right to a nuclear weapons program. U.S. officials have made it clear the sanctions will stay in place until the North takes concrete steps toward denuclearization.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Japan's ruling party to vote for new leader to replace Suga

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's governing party will vote to pick its new leader Wednesday, with the presumed next prime minister facing imminent, crucial tasks such as addressing a pandemic-hit economy and ensuring strong alliance with Washington amid growing regional security risks. The new leader also needs to change the party's high-handed reputation, worsened by the outgoing Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga who angered the public over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and insistence on holding the Olympics in Tokyo this past summer. The long-ruling conservative Liberal Democratic Party desperately needs to quickly turn around plunging public support ahead of lower house elections coming within two months, observers say.

Thailand issues new flood warnings from seasonal rain

BANGKOK (AP)—Officials in Thailand issued fresh warnings Tuesday about flooding caused by seasonal monsoon rains, after at least seven deaths were reported in the aftermath of a tropical storm that struck over the weekend. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said one person was also reported missing from flooding triggered by Tropical Storm Dianmu, also called Tianmu. The agency announced late Tuesday that 126,781 households in 30 provinces, mostly in the north, northeast and central regions had been affected, a 78% increase over the 71,093 reported a day earlier. The capital, Bangkok, is among the areas issued warnings, and some businesses began piling sandbags in front of their entrances.

S. Korean leader's review of ban on eating dog meat welcomed

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Animal rights groups on Tuesday welcomed the South Korean president's offer to look into banning consumption of dog meat. Dog meat is neither legal nor explicitly banned in South Korea. Restaurants that serve it are a dwindling business here as younger people find dog meat a less appetizing dining option. But some people oppose a ban as a surrender to Western pressure. During a meeting with his prime minister on Monday, President Moon Jae-in asked "if it's time to carefully consider" a ban, according to his office. It's unclear when a review would take place and when or whether a ban would be realized.

China plans to unveil drones, moon rocket at air show

ZHUHAI, China (AP)—A military drone whose manufacturer says it can cruise for 20 hours at 15,000 meters (50,000 feet) was among Chinese warplanes, missiles and other weapons technology shown in public for the first time Tuesday at the opening of the country's biggest air show. The Chinese space program planned to unveil a rocket for crewed space flight capable of carrying a 25-ton payload to lunar orbit at the 13th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, an official newspaper said. The event, which runs through Sunday, was postponed from late 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The ruling Communist Party is pouring billions of dollars into developing fighter jets, stealth technology, drones and other hardware for its military wing, the People's Liberation Army, as it presses claims to disputed seas and other territory.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Gang clash at Ecuador prison kills 24 inmates and injures 48

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—A riot in a penitentiary in coastal city of Guayaquil killed 24 inmates and injured 48 more Tuesday, Ecuadorian officials said. A police and military operation managed to regain control of the Guayaquil prison after five hours, according to a statement from Ecuador's prison service. Guayas state Gov. Pablo Arosemena said at a news conference outside the Litoral prison that order had been restored. "The presence of the state and the law must be felt," he said. The violence involved gunfire, knives and explosions and was caused by a dispute between the "Los Lobos" and "Los Choneros" prison gangs, officials said. Television images showed inmates firing from the windows of the prison amid smoke and the detonation of firearms and explosives. The Guayas state government posted images on its Twitter account showing six cooks being evacuated from one of the prison's wings.

Haiti PM plans to hold elections next year

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Struggling with political turmoil and the aftermath of an earthquake, Haiti's prime minister said Tuesday that he plans to hold a referendum to modify the country's constitution by February, and he hopes to organize presidential and legislative elections early next year. In an interview with The Associated Press at his official residence, Ariel Henry dismissed opponents who accuse him of wanting to stay in power and said that mistrust is one of the biggest challenges he faces. The referendum is a priority, Henry said, because the current constitution is rejected by a majority of political figures and civil society leaders. He said an electoral council that will be responsible for setting dates has yet to be named after he recently dissolved the previous provisional council. "The elections must be held as soon as possible," he said as he lamented the lack of trust among Haitians. "People don't believe what is being said."

Panel finds 80 alleged abuse cases tied to WHO's Congo work

BENI, Congo (AP)—Twenty-one workers for the World Health Organization in Congo have been accused of sexually abusing people during a Ebola outbreak, a WHO-commissioned panel said Tuesday in a report that identified 83 alleged perpetrators connected to the 2018-2020 mission. The panel released its findings months after an Associated Press investigation found senior WHO management was informed of multiple abuse claims in 2019 but failed to stop the harassment and even promoted one of the managers involved. "This is the biggest finding of sexual abuse perpetrated during a single U.N. initiative in one area or one country during the time-bound period of a U.N. response effort," said Paula Donovan, co-director of the Code Blue Campaign, which is campaigning to end sexual exploitation by U.N. peacekeepers. Panel member Malick Coulibaly said investigators uncovered a total of nine rape allegations.

Brazil doctors accuse health company of forcing chloroquine

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—A Brazilian health care provider focused on elderly people has been targeted by a Senate investigation for allegedly obliging its doctors to prescribe drugs that aren't effective in treating COVID-19. Lawyer Bruna Morato, who represents 12 whistleblowing doctors currently or previously employed by the company Prevent Senior, told lawmakers on Tuesday her clients were repeatedly told to choose between prescribing chloroquine to COVID patients, along with other dubious substances, or else lose their jobs. Prevent Senior owns several hospitals in Sao Paulo. The doctors remained anonymous due to fears of retribution. "Some were warned, and that happened in front of others. Other professionals were fired," the lawyer said. "There was also a punishment that was common: they had their shifts reduced. If you didn't show loyalty to the company and obedience to those protocols, you got punished."

Mexico tries to ease asylum backlog in face of frustrations

TAPACHULA, Mexico (AP)—Trying to ease a backlog in Mexico's asylum system and the resulting frustrations that drove thousands of applicants to head toward the U.S., Mexican officials opened a mammoth reception center outside a soccer stadium near the Guatemala border Tuesday. The Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance, with the help of the National Guard and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, targeted those who had already made initial applications for protected status in Mexico but had waited months for an initial interview. The site outside Tapachula's Olympic Stadium could handle as many as 2,000 people daily, said Alma Delia Cruz Márquez, the commission's local delegate. Previously, huge crowds had packed the streets around the commission's downtown offices in Tapachula jostling for position.

We are deeply saddened
to inform you of the passing of

Barry Ladd

who left for his heavenly abode
on September 27, 2021.

A dearly beloved father and friend,
Barry's warm, compassionate
and kindred spirit will be sorely missed.
For the repose of his soul, Catholic prayers
are offered at Barry's residence in
Chalan Kanoa, by Soledad Street,
behind LJ market, nightly at 6:00 PM.

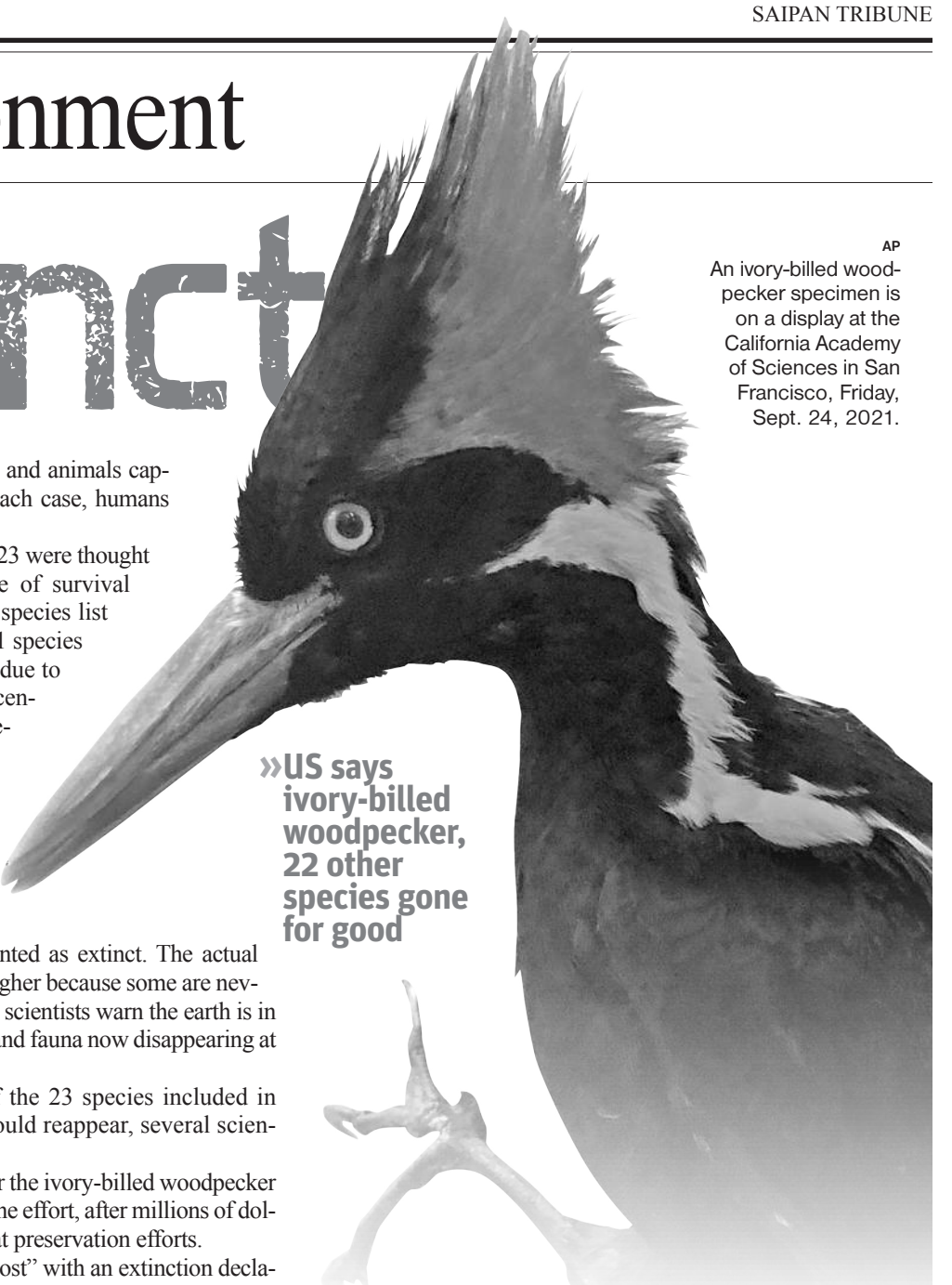
From Barry's friends, and colleagues
of Misamis Construction Limited

For more information,
please call Selmo of the
Santo Nino Group at 783-2160.

Thank you for your condolences,
thoughts, and prayers

Environment

now extinct



AP
An ivory-billed woodpecker specimen is on a display at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021.

»US says ivory-billed woodpecker, 22 other species gone for good

By MATTHEW BROWN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)—Death's come knocking a last time for the splendid ivory-billed woodpecker and 22 more birds, fish and other species: The U.S. government is declaring them extinct.

It's a rare move for wildlife officials to give up hope on a plant or animal, but government scientists say they've exhausted efforts to find these 23. And they warn climate change, on top of other pressures, could make such disappearances more common as a warming planet adds to the dangers facing imperiled plants and wildlife.

The ivory-billed woodpecker was perhaps the best known species the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Wednesday will announce is extinct. It went out stubbornly and with fanfare, making unconfirmed appearances in recent decades that ignited a frenzy of ultimately fruitless searches in the swamps of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida.

Others such as the flat pigtoe, a freshwater mussel in the southeastern U.S., were identified in the wild only a few times and never seen again, meaning by the time they got a name they were fading from existence.

"When I see one of those really rare ones, it's always in the back of my mind that I might be the last one to see this animal again," said Anthony "Andy" Ford, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist in Tennessee who specializes in freshwater mussels.

The factors behind the disappearances vary—too much development, water pollution, logging, competition from invasive species, birds killed for feathers and animals captured by private collectors. In each case, humans were the ultimate cause.

Another thing they share: All 23 were thought to have at least a slim chance of survival when added to the endangered species list beginning in the 1960s. Only 11 species previously have been removed due to extinction in the almost half-century since the Endangered Species Act was signed into law. Wednesday's announcement kicks off a three-month comment period before the species status changes become final.

Around the globe, some 902 species have been documented as extinct. The actual number is thought to be much higher because some are never formally identified, and many scientists warn the earth is in an "extinction crisis" with flora and fauna now disappearing at 1,000 times the historical rate.

It's possible one or more of the 23 species included in Wednesday's announcement could reappear, several scientists said.

A leading figure in the hunt for the ivory-billed woodpecker said it was premature to call off the effort, after millions of dollars spent on searches and habitat preservation efforts.

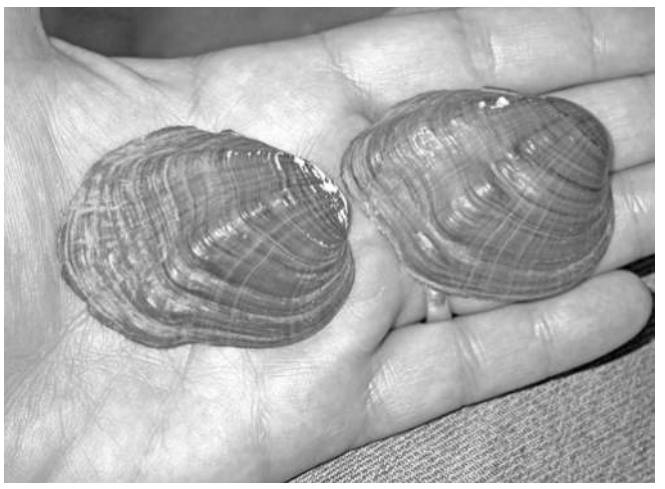
"Little is gained and much is lost" with an extinction declaration, said Cornell University bird biologist John Fitzpatrick, lead author of a 2005 study that claimed the woodpecker had been rediscovered in eastern Arkansas.

"A bird this iconic, and this representative of the major old-growth forests of the southeast, keeping it on the list of endangered species keeps attention on it, keeps states thinking about managing habitat on the off chance it still exists," he said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature, a Switzerland-based group that tracks extinctions globally, is not putting the ivory-billed woodpecker into its extinction column because it's possible the birds still exist in Cuba, said the group's Craig Hilton-Taylor.

Hilton-Taylor said there can be unintended but damaging consequences if extinction is declared prematurely. "Suddenly the (conservation) money is no longer there, and then suddenly you do drive it to extinction because you stop investing in it," he said.

Federal officials said the extinctions declaration was driven by a desire to clear a backlog of recommended status changes for species that had not been acted upon for years. They said it would free up resources for on-the-ground conservation efforts for species that still have a chance for recovery.



AP
In this May 10, 2005, photo, shells from tubercled-blossom pearly mussels (Epioblasma torulosa) collected from the Ohio River are held at Chase Studio in Cedarcreek, Mo.

What's lost when those efforts fail are creatures often uniquely adapted to their environments. Freshwater mussel species like the ones the government says have gone extinct reproduce by attracting fish with a lure-like appendage, then sending out a cloud of larvae that attach to gills of fish until they've grown enough to drop off and live on their own.

The odds are slim against any mussel surviving into adulthood—a one in a million chance, according to Ford of the wildlife service—but those that do can live a century or longer.

Hawaii has the most species on the list—eight woodland birds and one plant. That's in part because the islands have so many plants and animals that many have extremely small ranges and can blink out quickly.

The most recent to go extinct was the teeny po'ouli, a type of bird known as a honeycreeper discovered in 1973.

By the late 1990s just three remained—a male and two females. After failures to mate them in the wild, the male was captured for potential breeding and died in 2004. The two females were never seen again.

The fate of Hawaii's birds helped push Duke University extinction expert Stuart Pimm into his field. Despite the grim nature of the government's proposal to move more species into the extinct column, Pimm said the toll would probably have been much higher without the Endangered Species Act.

"It's a shame we didn't get to those species in time, but when we do, we are usually able to save species," he said.

Since 1975, 54 species have left the endangered list after recovering, including the bald eagle, brown pelican and most humpback whales.

Climate change is making species recovery harder, bringing drought, floods, wildfires and temperature swings that compound the threats species already faced.

How they are saved also is changing. No longer is the focus on individual species, let alone individual birds. Officials say the broader goal now is to preserve their habitat, which boosts species of all types that live there.

"I hope we're up to the challenge," said biologist Michelle Bogardus with the wildlife service in Hawaii. "We don't have the resources to prevent extinctions unilaterally. We have to think proactively about ecosystem health and how do we maintain it, given all these threats."

Examples of the Bachman's warbler lie in a specimen tray at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, Friday, Sept. 24, 2021. AP

Life & Style

John Lennon interview tape fetches $58,240 at Danish auction

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—A cassette tape with a 33-minute audio recording of John Lennon being interviewed by four Danish teenagers 51 years ago as well as an apparently unpublished song by the late Beatle fetched 370,000 kroner ($58,240) Tuesday at an auction in Denmark.

The tape, recorded on Jan. 5, 1970, chiefly consists of Lennon and his wife, Yoko Ono, speaking about being in Denmark and world peace. It also has the couple singing two songs: 1969's "Give Peace a Chance" and "Radio Peace," which was made for a radio station in the Netherlands but never released.

The cassette was put up for sale by Bruun Rasmussen Auctioneer in Copenhagen, together with 29 still photos and a copy of the school newspaper for which the teenagers had interviewed Lennon and Ono. The pre-sale estimate for the lot was 200,000 kroner to 300,000 kroner ($31,481 to $47,222).

"It is a small item with lots of interest," auctioneer Jesper Bruun Rasmussen said as he brought the hammer down.

"I thought it was extraordinary that it went above the estimate," Alexa Bruun Rasmussen of Denmark's main auction house told The Associated Press. "Unfortunately it is confidential who the buyer is but I can reveal that it went abroad."

The Danish teenagers did the interview in northern Denmark at the height of the Vietnam War and the Cold War because Lennon and Ono had "a message of peace, and that was what was important to us," Karsten Hoejen, who made the recording on a tape recorder borrowed from the local hi-fi shop, told The Associated Press.

After the sale in a packed auction hall, Hoejen said "it exceeded all expectations."

"There is some kind of relief now," he said, adding the three surviving men who did the interview have not decided what to do with the money.

Lennon and Ono were in the northern Danish region of Thy because Ono's ex-husband had moved there and brought their 5-year-old daughter Kyoko with him.

Alternative living communities also mushroomed in Denmark from the late 1960s, attracting people from abroad, and music festivals were organized there, inspired by Woodstock and the ones on the Isle of Wight.

Lashana Lynch, from left, Daniel Craig and Lea Seydoux pose for photographers upon arrival for the World premiere of the new film from the James Bond franchise 'No Time To Die', in London Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021.

AP PHOTO/MATT DUNHAM

Royals join cast of new Bond film for glitzy London premiere

LONDON (AP)—Britain's royals joined Daniel Craig, Lea Seydoux and the cast of "No Time to Die" on the red carpet for the new Bond film's world premiere Tuesday, a glittering event that marked the movie's release after multiple delays caused by the pandemic.

The film, the 25th in the long-running series and Craig's last outing as 007, was initially due to be released in April 2020.

Craig, who turned up for the red carpet at the Royal Albert Hall in a pink velvet dinner jacket, told reporters how relieved he was that the film was finally making its way to cinemas.

"A year ago, this was just a dream. It didn't look like we'd get here. But we have and I'm just happy that we're here and we can celebrate with everybody," he said.

Seydoux echoed the sense of relief, saying: "It's been such a crazy time for all of us. And now to celebrate, you know, with this film, to reunite. And it's great. I'm really happy."

Craig, 53, has played the suave secret agent in five movies, beginning with "Casino Royale" in 2006.

Asked how he felt about saying goodbye to the role, he said: "I'm good. I'm really good about it." As for who would be his successor, he simply quipped: "Not my problem."

Prince Charles, his wife Camilla, Prince William and his wife Kate the Duchess of Cambridge made a rare joint appearance at the premiere, and Kate stole the show with a sparkling gold cape dress by designer Jenny Packham.

Actor Rami Malek, who joins the franchise as villain Safin, later met the royals. He was joined by Lashana Lynch, who plays the first Black female 00 agent Nomi, and Naomie Harris, who returns as Moneypenny.

Health care workers and members of Britain's armed forces were among those invited to Tuesday's premiere in thanks for their work during the pandemic.

The film will be released in U.K. cinemas on Sept. 30.

Former ABC News executive says Chris Cuomo harassed her

NEW YORK (AP)—A television executive who accused Chris Cuomo of groping her at a party 16 years ago says the CNN anchor needs a public education about sexual harassment and if he did that, "he'd be a hero instead of a cad."

The executive, Shelley Ross, said Friday she's concerned that Cuomo's reaction to her story and his role advising his brother, former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, indicates that he's learned little about harassment and what it does to women.

"I don't want to see anybody lose their job," Ross told The Associated Press. "I want to see people learn and to make the news business a better place and the workplace a better place."

Her story represented another embarrassment for the host of "Cuomo Prime Time," generally the network's top-rated show. He has been criticized for his role advising his brother, Andrew Cuomo, who resigned as New York governor last month over allegations of sexual harassment from multiple women.

Cuomo

Cuomo did not address the matter on his show Friday night.

Ross said in an opinion piece in The New York Times on Friday that Chris Cuomo had greeted her at a going-away party in 2005 with a bear hug "while lowering one hand to firmly grab and squeeze the cheek of my buttock."

Ross said Cuomo told her, "I can do this now that you're no longer my boss," and she responded, "No you can't," pushing him off while stepping back to reveal her husband, who saw the whole thing.

In an interview, Ross called it an attempt to diminish and belittle a female executive in front of her staff.

Cuomo sent an apologetic email to Ross shortly afterward saying he was "ashamed."

Asked for comment, Cuomo told the Times, "As Shelley acknowledges, our interaction was not sexual in nature. It happened 16 years ago in a public setting when she was a top executive at ABC. I apologized to her then, and I meant it." CNN had no additional comment on Friday.

Spiteful ex causes legal nightmares

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I have been together for five years, and friends for eight. We share a daughter, who is a toddler. I have a son with my abusive ex as well. Although we are financially stable, we qualify as low-income. (I am the breadwinner.)

My boyfriend had a hard home life and was a troubled youth growing up. He has a criminal history, which is why my family opposed our relationship. He's a wonderful father and has changed his life, but we have experienced many hardships because of his past. Because of a phone call from my ex, the state picked up his most recent charge from four years ago, and he is now facing prison time for a crime he did not commit.

We are both devastated. He has become withdrawn and is now at a paranoid level of distrusting. I know he has every right to be upset. But after six months of urging him to seek professional help and fearing he regrets being with me, I'm wondering if I'm doing myself a disservice by not seeking happiness elsewhere. I know I should be there for him because he needs me. But he won't make future plans or seek better job opportunities because of his fear of prison time. What should I do?

IN A CORNER IN WISCONSIN

DEAR IN A CORNER: You are in a difficult situation, but don't cut and run just yet. Advise your boyfriend that reclaiming his future may require the help of a criminal defense attorney. Then help him find one who will take his case and defend him if the need arises. And while you are at it, maintain as much distance as you can from your vindictive ex.

■ ■ ■ ■

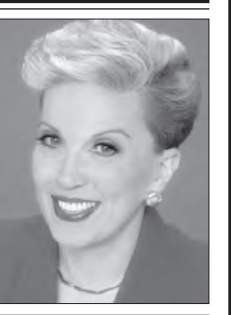
DEAR ABBY: I've had a male friend, "Herb," for more than 35 years. He has helped me a lot with things such as repairs at my home. Many years ago, I became pregnant, but the baby's father and I didn't end up together. When Herb offered to marry me and raise my child as his own, that's when I realized he had feelings for me. I explained that this was a kind offer, but I could not reciprocate his feelings.

Over the past 10 years, Herb has become touchy-feely, and it makes me very uncomfortable. He will kiss me on my forehead or come from behind me and hold me or hug me while rubbing my back. I have told him how it makes me feel and he laughs it off. He also makes remarks like, "Oh, I've never been in your bedroom," or while we're on the phone he tells me he is in bed and we are having pillow talk. What can I do? He's been a good friend, and I hate to lose his friendship, but I really don't know what else I can say to him to make him understand how he makes me feel.

TOO FRIENDLY IN OHIO

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

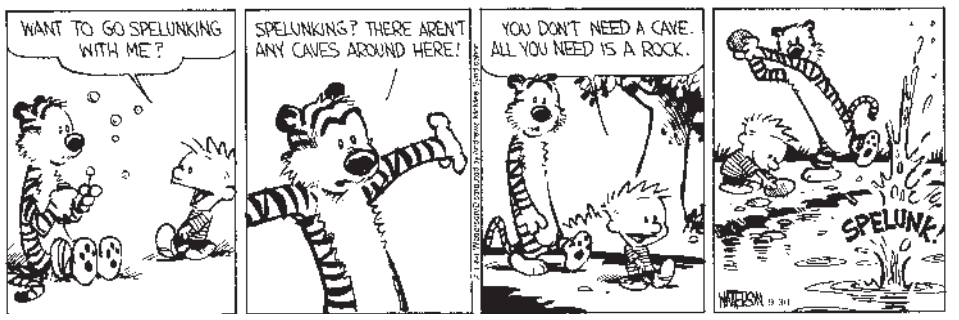
DEAR TOO FRIENDLY: Try this: When Herb gives you an unwanted kiss or hug, tell him you do not enjoy it when he invades your personal space and you don't want it to happen again. If he brings up the subject of your bedroom or alludes to pillow talk during a phone call, get off the phone immediately. ("Gotta go now!") Frankly, what he has been doing is creepy. If it continues, you will have to end the relationship and hire a handyman.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WANT TO GO SPELUNKING WITH ME?
SPELUNKING? THERE AREN'T ANY CAVES AROUND HERE!
YOU DON'T NEED A CAVE. ALL YOU NEED IS A ROCK.
SPELUNK!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

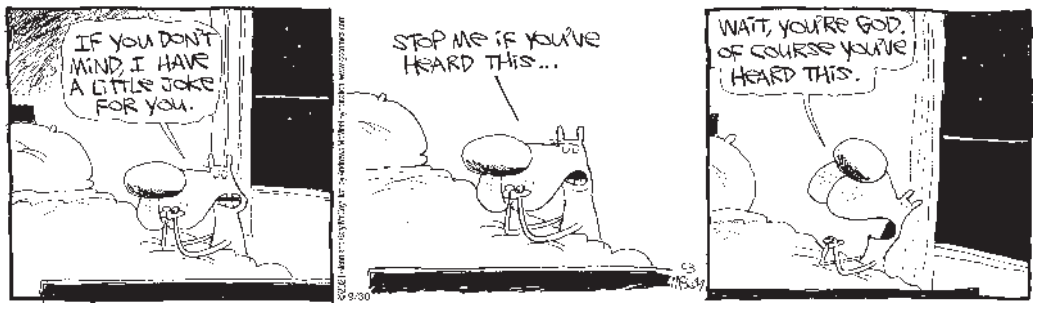
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

SERIOUSLY? YOU TOOK A NAP AND YOU'RE STUCK LIKE THAT?
YEAH.
BUT IT'S NOT ALL BAD.
REALLY?
HOW SO?
WELL... SAY I WANT TO PUT IN SOME EYEDROPS... ADAM'S GOOD TO GO!
9.30

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Bud holder
5 Wide smile
9 Workout unit
12 Sacred bird of Egypt
13 First-rate
14 Rock's Brian
15 End of a joke
17 Coloring agent
18 Cooks, as broccoli
19 Ambition
21 Brit. bigwig
22 Robber
24 Pudding variety
27 Three, in Rome
28 Pacific nation
31 Docs' bloc
32 Not 'neath
33 '60s war zone
34 Casual shirt
36 6 on a phone
37 Spider creations
38 Rainbow-shaped
40 Scale member
41 Disney pachyderm
43 Sweden's neighbor
47 Shapiro of NPR
48 Spiny critter
51 Can material
52 Bailiwick
53 Writer Buchanan
54 Jargon suffix
55 Luke's teacher
56 Beloved

DOWN

1 Hotshots
2 Border on
3 Trig function
4 Flee
5 Guys' dates
6 King, in Cannes
7 Hostel
8 "— say more?"
9 Transform
10 New Age singer
11 Verse
16 "Let me think ..."
20 Ump
22 Pollster's find
23 Long lunch?
24 Knock
25 "As I see it," in a text
26 Poison ivy lotion
27 Hefty book
29 Poke
30 Online chats, briefly
35 Sphere
37 Bent out of shape
39 HMO fee
40 Singer Rawls
41 Appointment
42 "The Haj" author
43 March Madness gp.
44 Broad
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46 Wine label datum
49 Acapulco gold
50 Flushed

Solution time: 24 mins.

W	A	R	P	■	K	E	A	■	A	D	A	M
A	B	O	O	■	N	O	N	■	S	W	A	R
D	U	M	P	I	N	G	■	S	E	R	A	■
S	T	O	P	I	T	■	S	C	A	I	F	S
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~	A	D	■	T	E	L	■	B	L	I	S	S
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A	S	I	S	■	D	U	C	K	L	I	N	G
P	E	N	T	■	D	N	A	■	A	L	G	A
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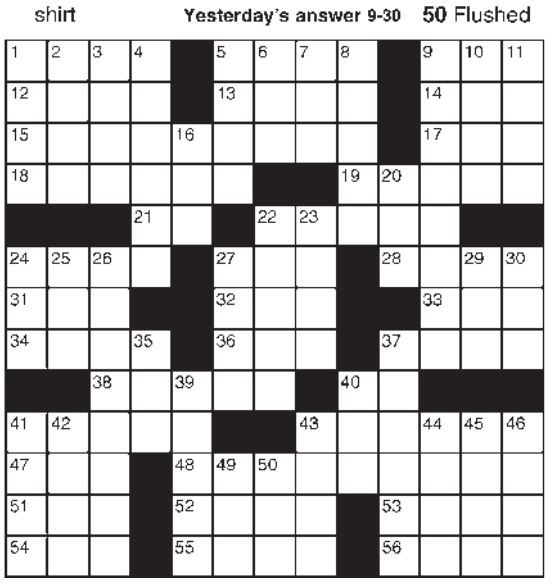
Yesterday's answer 9-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lacey Chabert, 39; Marion Cotillard, 46; Chris Jackson, 46; Fran Drescher, 64.

Happy Birthday: Do what needs to be done to keep moving forward. Refuse to let the little things slow you down. Put your heart into what brings you the most joy, and turn any negative situation you face into a positive one. Speak up, share your thoughts and be the one to make a difference. Engage in activities that nurture the soul and encourage personal growth. Your numbers are 6, 17, 22, 29, 31, 38, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You'll need to muster up discipline if you want to finish what you start. Refuse to let someone lead you astray with a tempting offer. Finish what you start before you kick back and relax, and you'll have no regrets. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't mix business with pleasure. Someone will use emotional tactics to throw you off guard. Stand your ground, and follow through with your plans. Don't feel you have to overspend to impress someone. Avoid excessiveness and risky situations. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Take your time and do things right the first time. Ask for an extension if it will help you outdo expectations. Plan to network with people who inspire you. The input you receive will give you the push you need to excel. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Say no to anyone using coercive tactics to manipulate you. Get involved in events and activities that are creative and give you the chance to explore something that satisfies you. Turn what you love to do into a profitable endeavor. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Count your money and put it to good use. Spending without a purpose will lead to regret. Be smart in the way you run your house, and intelligently handle those looking for a handout. Don't risk your health or physical well-being. Avoid crowds. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take a break and reevaluate. A slight adjustment can make a big difference in the way you handle others. Refuse to let anyone put undue pressure on you. Set goals that are conducive to what you want to achieve. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Pay attention to how and what you do, not to what's going on around you. Taking care of your responsibilities and paying attention to detail will help alleviate a run-in with someone demeaning. Leave nothing to chance. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Less waffling and more action will resolve pending issues. An innovative approach will help you pursue the changes required to reach your target. It will also motivate you to start putting the stepping-stones in place now. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take care of money matters before it's too late. Not having a realistic view of how much cash flow is available will lead to expenditures you cannot afford. Be smart and set a budget first. Spend without going into debt. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stop, look and listen. Impulsive action will be your downfall. Investigate the ins and outs of a situation before you get involved. Change begins with research, dedication and the ability to follow through with confidence. Romance and self-improvement are encouraged. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Pay attention to what's going on around you. Set rules and abide by regulations. Stay focused on what you are trying to achieve, and make your money stretch rather than going over budget. Don't take risks with your health or physical well-being. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Personal gain is apparent. Spend time honing your skills and updating your appearance. Preparation will make the difference between achieving what you set out to do and surpassing your expectations. Love and romance are in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are resourceful, knowledgeable and protective. You are intuitive and persistent.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5			1			
	4	6		3		2		
9						5	6	
	2		7	9				
			3	8		1		
6	9						5	
	7		1		8	4		
		3			9			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 9/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	6	3	4	2	1	5	7	9
1	9	2	7	8	5	4	6	3
5	4	7	3	9	6	2	8	1
9	3	5	6	1	2	8	4	7
7	8	1	5	4	9	6	3	2
4	2	6	8	7	3	1	9	5
2	1	8	9	3	4	7	5	6
6	7	9	2	5	8	3	1	4
3	5	4	1	6	7	9	2	8

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THINGS THAT FLY & GLIDE **Solution: 8 letters**

E	H	P	R	A	S	E	T	U	H	C	A	R	A	P
E	T	A	M	A	L	L	A	R	D	E	Ⓓ	Ⓡ	Ⓘ	Ⓑ
B	O	I	U	I	S	L	W	I	T	U	E	H	E	I
S	M	C	K	C	L	A	I	I	S	D	S	E	N	A
I	E	R	S	R	E	B	L	T	I	E	L	S	N	S
R	A	I	I	N	E	L	D	L	C	I	E	O	D	R
F	D	N	O	S	E	T	G	A	S	C	R	O	R	E
I	G	R	T	T	E	P	P	S	T	E	V	G	F	T
S	D	S	A	S	R	S	I	O	H	E	S	N	L	P
H	K	S	U	G	F	M	G	F	H	L	E	R	Y	O
E	A	I	E	B	O	A	E	A	S	T	D	E	B	C
L	E	W	E	I	R	N	O	S	S	T	I	T	O	O
G	P	E	K	R	L	I	N	T	N	E	R	N	A	T
A	S	T	E	J	T	F	A	R	C	R	I	A	R	C
E	G	A	R	R	A	B	A	T	O	K	A	L	D	O

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Airbus, Aircraft, Ants, Area, Ball, Barrage, Bats, Bees, Bird, Blimp, Darts, Discs, Dove, Dragon, Drone, Dust, Eagle, Fast, Fish, Flies, Flyboard, Free, Frisbee, Glider, Goose, Hawk, Heron, Insect, Jets, Kite, Lakota, Lantern, Mallard, Missile, Moth, Octocopters, Ornithopter, Parachute, Peak, Pigeon, Rides, Rings, Rise, Satellite, Saucer, Skier, Soar, Spaceship, Wild

Yesterday's Answer: Cottage

The NEW **Treasury 43** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Lakers say they're building a vintage championship contender

AP
Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James fields questions during the NBA basketball team's Media Day Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021, in El Segundo, Calif.

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP)—LeBron James has heard the basketball world talking about how the Los Angeles Lakers are too old, and he is laughing — both literally and figuratively.

"Some of the memes and some of the jokes have been extremely funny," James said with a grin Tuesday.

At 36 years old, James is on a roster of his peers as he enters his 19th NBA season. Nine of the Lakers' 14 current players are 32 or older, including including eight of their 11 new additions — and Anthony Davis is a high-mileage 28. Depending on any late moves, the Lakers' average age is likely to be nearly 31, which would be two years older than any other NBA roster.

But instead of fixating on his new teammates' 1980s birthdates, James thinks people should be focusing on the skill, experience and athleticism represented by all those numbers. Russell Westbrook, Carmelo Anthony and a supporting cast of accomplished NBA veterans are teaming up with James and Davis, and they are confident they can prove age is not yet a hindrance to their incredible talent.

"We come out and we put the time in, we put the work in," James said. "We make our own narrative. One thing that we know (is) who we are. We've got a bunch of guys that have been in this league quite a while that understand and know what it takes to win. The business that we're in is winning, and doing it all the time."

The rest of James' new teammates react to the questions around their ages with the same raised eyebrows. The Lakers all seem to wonder why the skeptics don't realize these players have outlasted dozens of younger players in the NBA for some very good reasons.

"It's never bulletin-board material, because it's somebody else's narrative," said Anthony, James' fellow member of the draft class of 2003. "We don't get moments like this often where you have a group of guys with this stature on one team who all like each other. That's hard to find."

The Lakers got together Tuesday at their training complex for media day exactly three weeks before their regular-season opener against Golden State at Staples Center.

With just three players returning from last season's team, the Lakers realize they have work to do, and they've already begun their bonding with a recent weekend trip to Las Vegas. They hope to find a groove swiftly with a roster also including newcomers DeAndre Jordan, Rajon Rondo, Kent Bazemore, Trevor Ariza and three-time Lakers center Dwight Howard — along with youngsters Malik Monk and Kendrick Nunn.

James isn't worried about finding a rhythm with Westbrook, the ball-dominating Los Angeles native landed by the Lakers in a blockbuster trade with Washington after averaging a triple-double yet again last season. The third-leading scorer in NBA history cited his years of experience in playing alongside gifted teammates ranging from Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh to Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love.

"I'm very cerebral about what I need to do in order for our team to be as great as we can be, and also to (complement) what Russ brings to the table," James said. "I always figure it out. I don't think it's going to be like peanut butter and jelly to start the season, but that's all part of the process and all part of my work. I like to actually put in the work to get to how great it can be."

The Lakers have also taken a major step toward togetherness and health by getting their roster fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Even Bazemore, an outspoken vaccine skeptic last season in Golden State, has received his first dose and is eager to get his second.

Bazemore said he decided to get the vaccine after a conversation about life and philosophy with Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka.

"One thing you don't want to have is regret," Bazemore said. "And if I go to another team or miss this season because I didn't do it and I've got to watch these guys party with the Larry O'Brien Trophy because I didn't do it, I'd be pretty hurt."

James also confirmed he has been vaccinated, putting to rest the rumors around his previous reluctance to disclose his status. He acknowledged initial "skepticism" about the vaccine, but decided it was the right decision to stay healthy for his teammates and family.

Health undid the Lakers' title defense last season: Davis, James and several complementary players were limited or unable to play throughout Los Angeles' first-round loss to Phoenix.

Davis' absences have been the most crushing for the Lakers over the past two years, and the big man is eager to be more durable. As one of the Lakers' youngsters heading into only his ninth NBA season, he sees it as a responsibility.

"I didn't feel comfortable missing that many games," Davis said. "Not being able to play at full strength in the playoffs against Phoenix ... that didn't sit well with me. I made an emphasis on taking care of my body, getting my body back to what it was strength-wise my first year here."

Porter agrees to 5-year deal with Nuggets, worth up to $207M

AP
In this June 13, 2021, file photo, Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. (1) controls the ball in the second half of Game 4 of an NBA second-round playoff series against the Phoenix Suns in Denver.

DENVER (AP)—Sharpshooting forward Michael Porter Jr. has agreed to a five-year maximum extension with the Denver Nuggets that could be worth up to $207 million.

His agent, Mark Bartelstein, confirmed the deal to The Associated Press on Monday. ESPN first reported the deal.

Porter's agreement would be worth at least $173 million over five years and could rise to the supermax level of $207 million over that span if he reaches certain criteria this season.

He's assured of making at least $29.8 million in 2022-23, a figure that would rise if he qualified for more by being voted onto an All-NBA team or winning the league's MVP award this season.

This crowns a meteoric rise for Porter, whose college basketball career at Missouri was derailed by a back injury so severe that many questioned if he was worth the risk of being taken in the 2018 NBA draft. He slid to Denver at No. 14, the final lottery selection. Porter sat out his first season in Denver after undergoing a back procedure in July 2018.

He rebounded and has been rewarded handsomely. Porter is averaging 14.4 points per game in the NBA, eighth-best of those taken in that class.

The 23-year-old Porter is coming off a season in which he averaged 19 points and 7.3 rebounds. He also led the Nuggets with 170 3-pointers.

Next step: Up his game even more.

Maybe even to the lofty levels of what he accomplished during the NBA bubble in 2020. He was named to the All-Bubble second team after averaging 22 points, 8.6 rebounds and 1.6 assists over Denver's eight seeding games.

"He's put up incredible numbers for a guy that's only played two years in the NBA," coach Michael Malone said. "And the sky is the limit. Offensively, I think he has to be more disciplined in running the floor. The guy shoots the corner 3 like a layup, but now we have to get him to the corners more.

"He's got to be more disciplined in that instead of stopping in the middle of the floor or above the break. We're all, each of the 30 teams, trying to generate more corner 3s and in transition that's a great way to get them."

The 6-foot-10 Porter also has been working on shoring up his defense.

"He doesn't want to be a liability and he wants to be a player that I can trust at the end of games to close out games when we need a big stop," Malone said. "I love the fact that he's aware of that and he knows that it's not about being a great scorer."

This marked the second big extension this month for Denver. The team also agreed with Aaron Gordon on a four-year, $92 million deal. NBA MVP Nikola Jokic signed a five-year deal in '18 and point guard Jamal Murray in '19.

On Monday morning, president of basketball operations Tim Connelly seemed confident a deal would get completed.

"The neat thing about extensions are there's no acrimony," Connelly said. "When you have extension talks, it should be nothing but smiles because it's indicative of a relationship that doesn't have to yet be extended but we're looking to do so. I think both the team and Michael can't imagine him being elsewhere."

Wainwright leads Cards to 17th straight win, wild card berth

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Dylan Carlson, Nolan Arenado and Jose Rondon homered to back Adam Wainwright, and the St. Louis Cardinals extended their winning streak to 17 games and clinched an NL wild card berth with a 6-2 win over the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday night.

St. Louis will play in the NL wild-card game on Oct. 6 at the Los Angeles Dodgers or San Francisco, whichever does not win the NL West.

St. Louis was 71-69 on Sept. 11 before the winning streak, the longest in team history and the longest in the major leagues since Cleveland took 22 in a row in 2017.

Wainwright (17-7) allowed two runs and seven hits in six innings, throwing 102 pitches and stranding seven runners.

With the score 2-2 in the fifth, Paul Goldschmidt doubled off Jandel Gustave (1-1) and Tyler O'Neill followed with a single to right. The ball went under the glove of Avisail Garcia for a two-base error, and Nolan Arenado's sacrifice fly made it 4-2.

AP

St. Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Adam Wainwright tips his cap while being interviewed after the Cardinals defeated the Milwaukee Brewers in a baseball game to clinch a playoff spot Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021, in St. Louis.

Braves 2, Phillies 1

In Atlanta, Charlie Morton threw seven scoreless innings, Jorge Soler hit a two-run single and Atlanta escaped a ninth-inning jam to beat Philadelphia and move closer to its fourth consecutive NL East title.

Atlanta reduced its magic number to three games in the division race and extended its lead to 3 1/2 games over the second-place Phillies, who no longer control their fate with five games left. The loss eliminated Philadelphia from contention for an NL wild card.

Will Smith survived a wild ninth inning, allowing an unearned run, for his 36th save in 42 chances.

Morton (14-6) gave up singles to his first two batters and gave up only one more hit. He struck out 10 and walked two.

Zack Wheeler (14-10) was almost as impressive, allowing two runs and four hits with seven strikeouts in seven innings.

Yankees 7, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Giancarlo Stanton hit a three-run home run, Aaron Judge homered and New York beat Toronto to extend its lead atop the AL wild-card standings.

Gio Urshela added a solo homer and Anthony Rizzo had a pair of hits and drove in a run as New York (90-67) won its seventh straight and moved two games in front of Boston in the wild card race with five games left.

Toronto dropped three games behind the Yankees but remains a game behind Boston for the second wild card.

Judge's solo homer off left-hander Hyun Jin Ryu (13-10) in the third gave the Yankees at least one home run in 19 consecutive games, extending their season-high streak. Judge's homer was his 37th.

Orioles 4, Red Sox 2

In Baltimore, rookie Ryan Mountcastle hit his 32nd home run to help Baltimore rally past Chris Sale and stall Boston's bid to enhance its playoff position.

Boston lost its fourth straight but remained a game ahead of Toronto for the second AL wild card. The Yankees lead the wild-card race.

Sale (5-1) coasted through five innings, but in the sixth Kelvin Gutiérrez beat out an infield hit and Mountcastle went deep to tie it. Austin Hays followed with a single to end Sale's night before Severino delivered his go-ahead hit off Hansel Robles.

Marcos Diplán (2-0) pitched two innings, Joey Krehbel retired all six batters he faced and Cole Sulser worked the ninth for his eighth save.

Astros 4, Rays 3

In Houston, Tampa Bay's JT Chargois walked two batters with the bases loaded in the ninth inning as Houston snapped a four-game skid and moved closer to securing a postseason berth.

Alex Bregman and Jose Altuve homered for the Astros.

The Rays took a 3-2 lead when Randy Arozarena hit a solo homer off Phil Maton (5-0) with one out in the ninth.

Yordan Alvarez singled on a grounder off Josh Fleming (10-7) to start Houston's ninth. Later in the inning, Chargois took over and walked Chas McCormick on his 10th pitch to tie it. He then walked pinch-hitter Jason Castro on eight pitches.

Royals 6, Indians 4

In Kansas City, Mo., Salvador Perez hit his major league-leading 47th home run and Kansas City beat Cleveland.

Perez also leads the majors in RBIs (118). He trails Jorge Soler (2019) by one for the club record in homers.

Nicky Lopez tripled in the eighth to put the Royals ahead to stay and scored on a wild pitch to make it 6-4.

Josh Staumont (4-3), the Royals' seventh pitcher, got the final out of the eighth and worked a perfect ninth. Blake Parker (2-1) took the loss.

White Sox 7, Reds 1

In Chicago, Luis Robert homered twice, Reynaldo Lopez pitched two-hit ball over a season-high six innings, and Chicago beat Cincinnati as the Reds were eliminated from postseason contention.

The Reds had won four straight but were knocked out of the NL playoff hunt midgame when the St. Louis Cardinals beat Milwaukee to lock up the second wild card.

The AL Central champion White Sox have won three straight.

Lopez (4-3) hasn't issued a walk over his last 11 1/3 innings.

Mets 5, Marlins 2, game 1
Mets 2, Marlins 1, game 2

In New York, Noah Syndergaard looked sharp in his brief but long-awaited return from Tommy John surgery, and New York swept a doubleheader against Miami.

In the opener, Francisco Lindor homered and drove in three runs to help the Mets stop a five-game losing streak. Marcus Stroman (10-13) went five innings for his 10th win.

Brandon Nimmo tripled on the third pitch from rookie opener Zach Thompson (2-7) and scored on Lindor's single. Edwin Díaz worked the seventh for his 31st save in 37 chances.

Syndergaard started the nightcap and threw nine of 10 pitches for strikes in a perfect first inning. Reliever Brad Hand (6-7) worked a perfect inning for his first win with the Mets.

Javier Báez dashed home from third base with the winning run in extra innings as Anthony Bass (3-9) fumbled James McCann's slow bouncer between the mound and home plate.

Pirates 8, Cubs 6

In Pittsburgh, Colin Moran hit a three-run homer and drove in four runs as Pittsburgh rallied to hand Chicago its seventh straight loss.

The Pirates scored four times in the sixth to move ahead 7-6 and Moran singled home an insurance run in the seventh.

Enyel De Los Santos (2-1) pitched one scoreless inning for his first win since the Pirates claimed him off waivers from Philadelphia earlier this month. Adam Morgan (1-1) took the loss after relieving starter Alec Mills in the sixth.

Chris Stratton worked a scoreless ninth for his seventh save.

Rockies 3, Nationals 1

In Denver, Kyle Freeland efficiently pitched into the seventh inning before running into trouble, Trevor Story lined a long solo homer and Colorado beat Washington.

Freeland (7-8) was cruising along until the seventh, when he walked in a run with two outs to make it 2-1. Reliever Tyler Kinley got Alcides Escobar to fly out and end the threat.

Carlos Estévez pitched the ninth to earn his 10th save in 16 chances.

Patrick Corbin (9-16) tied a season high with nine strikeouts as he threw six innings. He allowed two runs—an RBI double by Ryan McMahon in the fourth and Story's 24th homer of the season in the fifth.

Twins 3, Tigers 2

In Minneapolis, Miguel Sanó homered and Minnesota pitchers shut down Detroit until the ninth inning.

Caleb Thielbar (7-0) was one of four relievers with scoreless innings in relief of starter Charlie Barnes. Alexander Colomé allowed two runs in the ninth, yet earned his 17th save.

Sanó led off the seventh with 30th homer of the season, which reached the second deck in left field.

Tyler Alexander (2-4) surrendered just one run in six innings for Detroit, which has lost four of five.

Rangers 5, Angels 2

In Arlington, Texas, rookie Andy Ibanez's two-run single highlighted a four-run second inning for Texas and fellow rookie A.J. Alexy won for the third time in four career starts as the Rangers beat Los Angeles.

Ibanez had three hits for the Rangers (58-99), who haven't lost 100 games since 1973.

Max Stassi hit a two-run home run for the Angels, who have lost nine of 11.

Alexy (3-1) allowed three hits, beginning with Stassi's second-inning homer, in five innings and threw a career-high 91 pitches. Joe Barlow celebrated his 26th birthday by pitching a scoreless ninth for his 10th save in 11 opportunities.

Dodgers 2, Padres 1

In Los Angeles, Walker Buehler tossed seven shutout innings to shake off his September slump and earn a career-best 15th victory, and the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the San Diego Padres 2-1 on Tuesday night.

The Dodgers came into the game trailing the NL West-leading San Francisco Giants by two games.

Buehler reached 202 2/3 innings pitched for the first time in his career, surpassing his previous high of 182 1/3 in 2019. The right-hander also went over 200 strikeouts, getting five to reach 201. His career high is 215, set two years ago.

Buehler (15-4) allowed three hits in his career-high 32nd start of the season. He walked two to win for the first time since Sept. 11, also against the Padres.

Mariners 4, Athletics 2

In Seattle, Mitch Haniger hit his 100th home run and third in two games, and the Seattle Mariners pulled within a half-game of the second AL wild card berth by beating the Oakland Athletics 4-2 on Tuesday night.

Tyler Anderson pitched four innings on two days' rest for the Mariners, who won their team-record 11th straight game over Oakland. The Mariners, 18 games over .500 for the first time since August 2018, has won four in a row and nine of 10.

Seattle (88-70) is just behind Boston (88-69) and just ahead of Toronto (87-70) in the wild card race, trailing the New York Yankees (90-67). The Mariners finish their series against the A's on Wednesday, then host the Los Angeles Angels for their final three games of the regular season.

Seattle would be eliminated from the AL West race with one more loss or one win by first-place Houston (92-65).

Giants 6, Diamondbacks 4

In San Francisco, Wilmer Flores hit a go-ahead, bases-loaded single in San Francisco's four-run sixth inning, Brandon Crawford added an RBI hit two batters later and the Giants beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 6-4 on Tuesday night.

The NL West-leading Giants (103-54) maintained a two-game division lead over the rival Dodgers, who beat the Padres at home. Los Angeles (101-56) has won the last eight West crowns.

San Francisco matched the 1993, 1962 and 1912 clubs for third-most wins in team history, trailing only 1905 (105) and 1904 (106).

The Giants loaded the bases in the sixth against Sean Poppen (1-1), starting with Evan Longoria reaching on a throwing error by shortstop Josh Rojas. Buster Posey drew a bases-loaded walk in the inning and later scored on a wild pitch.

Rags to riches: Boxing great Pacquiao announces retirement

By KIKO ROSARIO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Boxing legend Manny Pacquiao is officially hanging up his gloves.

The eight-division world champion and Philippines senator on Wednesday announced his retirement from the ring,

"As I hang up my boxing gloves, I would like to thank the whole world, especially the Filipino people for supporting Manny Pacquiao. Goodbye boxing," the 42-year old said in a 14-minute video posted on his Facebook page. "It is difficult for me to accept that my time as a boxer is over. Today I am announcing my retirement."

Pacquiao finished his 26-year, 72-fight career with 62 wins, eight losses and two draws. Of those 62 wins, 39 were by knockout and 23 by decision. He won 12 world titles and is the only fighter in history to win titles in eight different weight classes .

His retirement from boxing followed a disheartening defeat to Yordenis Ugas in Paradise, Nevada on Aug. 21. The younger Cuban boxer, who defected to the United States in 2010, beat Pacquiao by unanimous decision, retaining his WBA welterweight title. It was Pacquiao's first fight in more than two years.

AP

In this photo provided by the Manny Pacquiao MediaComms, Senator Manny Pacquiao raises his hands during a national convention of his PDP-Laban party in Quezon city, Philippines on Sunday Sept. 19, 2021.

"Thank you for changing my life, when my family was desperate, you gave us hope, you gave me the chance to fight my way out of poverty," Pacquiao said in the video. "Because of you, I was able to inspire people all over the world. Because of you I have been given the courage to change more lives. I will never forget what I have done and accomplished in my life that I can't imagine. I just heard the final bell. The boxing is over. "

Pacquaio had hinted at retirement recently. It also had been expected because he is setting his sights on a bigger political battlefield. Earlier this month, he accepted his political party's nomination and declared that that he will run for Philippines president in the May 2022 elections.

He has accused the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte, his former ally, of making corruption worse in the Philippines. He promised to fight poverty and warned corrupt politicians they will soon end in jail.

Pacquiao's rags-to-riches life story and legendary career brought honor to his Southeast Asian nation, where he is known by his monikers Pacman, People's Champ and National Fist.

He left his impoverished home in the southern Philippines as a teenager and stowed away on a ship bound for Manila. He made his professional boxing debut as a junior flyweight in 1995, at the age of 16, fighting his way out of abject poverty to become one of the world's highest-paid athletes.

Eddie Banaag, a 79-year-old retiree, said Pacquiao was his idol as a boxer and he watched almost all of his fights. But he believes the boxing icon should have retired earlier.

"He should have done that right after his victory over (Keith) Thurman," Banaag said of Pacquiao's win over Thurman on July 20, 2019 in Las Vegas, Pacquiao's second-last fight. "It would have been better if he ended his boxing career with a win rather than a loss."

Team Kio remains perfect after routing Ko'Bees

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The top met the bottom when unbeaten Team Kio took on cellar dweller Ko'Bees in the second game of the Island-wide Men's BudLight Basketball League last Monday night at the Tinian Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.

Team Kio took a while to blow out Ko'Bees but the inevitable eventually happened with the latter notching its ninth win without a single loss, 78-40, against the also-ran Ko'Bees.

After a low scoring first quarter that saw Kio only lead, 13-9, Robert Reyes and Marvin Cruz combined for 11 points to give their team a bit of wiggle room at the half, 29-23.

Reyes then personally presided over a Kio onslaught at the start of the second half, as the team finally put some distance between themselves and Ko'Bees. Kio's top scorer fired 12 points in the third quarter that saw them take a 57-32 spread against Ko'Bees.

It's as if a dam suddenly burst open in the fourth and final quarter, as Kio's deluge of points continued to inundate Ko'Bees. With Team Sablan—Pika, Bing, and Dustin—giving Reyes a hand, Kio completed the 39-point massacre.

Reyes top-scored for Kio with his 25 markers, while Cruz quietly back-stopped him all game with 12 points of his own.

In the earlier game, Rampage kept pace with the league-leader after laying waste to Team CNMI, 82-72.

Upset-conscious Team CNMI caught Rampage napping in the first quarter as they managed to take a 23-18 lead thanks to the two triples of Anthony Borja.

Rampage, however, took the game more seriously at the start of the second stanza and took the driver's seat, 39-33, at the half with Jayron Epity running amok with 12 points in the second quarter.

Epity continued his hot streak in the third, tossing in another 14 points as Rampage upped its lead to 61-48 entering the fourth and final quarter. Anthony and Esteven Borja tried to fight back in the last 10 minutes of the game, but lost steam in the end as Leo Pascua shut the door on CNMI with his timely 3-point shooting.

Epity was the high-point man for Rampage with a 34 points, while Pascua added 24 points in support. CNMI, which dropped to below .500 at 4-5, was led by the 19 points of Anthony Borja. At 8-1, Rampage is only half a game behind of squeaky clean Kio.

Last Friday, Marines Devil Dogs raised its record to 6-2 after downing RNV, 61-51. It was RNV's sixth loss in eight matches. The other game then saw FPA Power Builders manage to free itself out of the cellar after surprising SMA Flyers, 61-45. The latter is now tied with the former at 2-6.

The league resumed last night with FPA Power Builders seeking to a break a tie in the team standings with RNV in the first game. The second game then had SMA Flyers praying for a miracle against heavily favored Marines Devil Dogs.

First Game

Rampage 82 – J. Epity 34, Pascua 24, Johanes 6, T. Borja 6, R. Borja 4, Cepeda 4, Untalan 2, Erickson 2.

Team CNMI 72 – A. Borja 19, Maligson 10, Manansala 8, Lizama 8, K. Borja 8, E. Borja 8, D. Borja 7, Monkeya 2, Santos 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-23, 39-33, 61-48, 82-72.

Second Game

Team Kio 78 – Reyes 25, Cruz 12, B. Sablan 11, P. Sablan 10, D. Sablan 10, King 4, Kiyoshi 3, Sanchez 3, Cabrera 2.

Ko'Bees 40 – Slim 11, Haropol 10, Stanley 6, Miklo 5, Jay 3, Chino 3, Magas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 13-9, 29-23, 57-32, 78-40.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Tampa Bay	97	60	.618	–
New York	90	67	.573	7
Boston	88	69	.561	9
Toronto	87	70	.554	10
Baltimore	51	106	.325	46

Central Division

x-Chicago	90	68	.570	–
Cleveland	77	80	.490	12½
Detroit	75	82	.478	14½
Kansas City	72	85	.459	17½
Minnesota	70	87	.446	19½

West Division

Houston	92	65	.586	–
Seattle	88	70	.557	4½
Oakland	85	73	.538	7½
Los Angeles	74	83	.471	18
Texas	58	99	.369	34

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	84	72	.538	–
Philadelphia	81	76	.516	3½
New York	75	82	.478	9½
Washington	65	93	.411	20
Miami	64	93	.408	20½

Central Division

x-Milwaukee	94	63	.599	–
y-St. Louis	88	69	.561	6
Cincinnati	82	76	.519	12½
Chicago	67	90	.427	27
Pittsburgh	59	98	.376	35

West Division

z-San Francisco	103	54	.656	–
z-Los Angeles	101	56	.643	2
San Diego	78	79	.497	25
Colorado	72	85	.459	31
Arizona	50	107	.318	53

x-clinched division
y-clinched wild card
z-clinched playoff berth

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAKECARE

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badminton in the CNMI," the NMBA president said.

TakeCare, meanwhile, is pleased to sponsor a sports competition on the islands for the first time, as the company rallies behind every campaign that encourages the community to stay active through sports and live a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

"Supporting sports activities represents the core values and mission of TakeCare, as we advocate for a balanced lifestyle and encourage community awareness and knowledge on health issues, which are both helpful in disease prevention," said TakeCare health plan manager Nora Fejeran.

"We look forward to supporting more sports events in the CNMI in the future," she added.

TakeCare Badminton Open 2021 will have men's and women's singles events (Levels A, B, and C), which have drawn a combined entry of 29 players. The Level C doubles (men's and women's and mixed) also has 29 entries, while Level B doubles events have 26 teams, and nine squads have signed up for the Level A mixed and men's doubles.

The TakeCare Badminton Open 2021 will have its opening ceremony this Friday at 5:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium and matches will follow after. Games will continue this weekend and next. ***(PR)***

CANOES

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res asked the Pacific Games Council to add another three sports events—vaa, tennis, and weightlifting—to increase the sports calendar of the 2022 NMI Pacific Mini Games to nine.

Saipan Paddling Club, Napu Outrigger Canoe Club, Marianas Outrigger Club, and Marianas Pacific Paddlers make up the clubs under the NMNPSF.

THIRD

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Barman was the first swimmer in the men's division to finish the race in 8:00.65. He was followed by teammates Richard Zhao and Siwoo Lee who came in at 8:15.55 and 9:21.93. respectively.

The top swimmer in the division was just relieved he finally won in the last race of the open water series.

"This was the third time I swam in this contest and I was hoping that I will win. Before I was about to swim I was scared that I might get pushed back but luckily I wasn't. I swam the course and ended up getting first place and I was happy about it. I look forward to the next ocean swim," he said.

Like Barman, it was Zhao's third time to race in the 500m and he was also happy with his runner-up finish.

"I really liked this race. This was my third time joining the race. I became faster each time. I'm very happy for my improvement. Thanks to my coach and my family."

More than competing, Lee said he was also glad he took part in the race for the experience.

"Ocean swimming needs more energy than swimming in the pool. But this event gave me a good memory after I met a stingray. It was awesome! Thank you for Team Tsunami and coach Hiro [Kimura]."

Litulumar was like a mermaid possessed after ruling the women's division in a time of 8:19.03. Fellow Tsunami Saipan members Kaya Braxton and Maria Guerrero came in second and third with swims of 8:20.01 and 8:24.14, respectively.

Litulumar was just happy the third time was the charm for her in last Saturday's race.

"It was my first time getting first place so I was really proud of myself. I never knew that I could get first place because there were a lot of fast swimmers doing 500 meters too. If we have another ocean swim I am aiming to get even more faster so that I could get a faster time and get another first place medal."

Regardless of placing or not, Braxton said she's just content in taking part in the race.

"Honestly if I didn't get second place, I'm still happy. It was a little hard but still fun and really appreciate my coach. He always make us try our best and make us faster and swimmers in the swim meet did very good."

Unlike the second open water swim a couple of months ago, Guerrero said the conditions were a lot more conducive for better swims.

"Sea conditions were a lot better than last time. I enjoyed this last ocean swim meet. I'm proud of being third place again as well as being a part of Team Tsunami," she said.

Results of the 100m, 50m, and 25m open water races will be published in tomorrow's issue of the *Saipan Tribune.*

Lakers say they're building a vintage championship contender

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Rags to riches: Boxing great Pacquiao announces retirement

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Canoes for Mini Games expected any day now

By MARK RABAGO
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The Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation is expecting the delivery of six spanking new outrigger canoes the CNMI National Outrigger Canoe Team will use in the islands' hosting of the Pacific Mini Games next year.

"We were informed by Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta that six canoes are scheduled to arrive at the end of this month," said NMNPSF president Justin Andrew.

In an earlier interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Babauta confirmed the delivery of the outrigger canoes any day now.

"Va'a is ready and the first shipment of boats is arriving soon. We would like to unveil these canoes to the national team. These are brand new boats. The latest of its kind for outrigger—V6 and V1," he said.

The outrigger competition of the Mini Games will be held at the 13 Fishermen Monument Beach and Babauta said the organizing committee is working closely with the Coastal Resources Management, Division of Environmental Quality, and all the necessary permitting agencies to facilitate the event.

Andrew, meanwhile, said the candidates for the CNMI National Outrigger Canoe Team are now transitioning into an elevated phase of training/tryout sessions involving more power endurance/conditioning and paddle technique and forms focus.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The latest V6 and V1 outrigger canoes are expected any day now that will help the Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation in its national training pool for next year's Pacific Mini Games the islands will be hosting for the very first time.

"We are hoping to have our national teams by late October. However, we are keen on ensuring having the best of our paddlers represent us. So this process will be to ensure just that and we are not fixed on a hard solid date to have our national team in place. We want the process to help us and so we are not rushing to a fixed date," he said.

Andrew assured everyone that the CNMI will have national teams soon.

"We know the importance of training together as a team and we understand that the process can also create anxiety and stress on our athletes thinking if they will make the team or not. That being said, we will do our best to not drag this process out longer than needed."

Outrigger canoe was originally not included in the calendar of sports events for next year's Mini Games. The CNMI was only expected to host six events—athletics, badminton, baseball, beach volleyball, golf, and triathlon—as a condition for pushing through with the quadrennial following the devastation brought about by Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018.

Later on, the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Tor-

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Third time's the charm for Shuman, Nagisa in 500m

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Persistence finally paid off for Shuman Barman and Nagisa Litulumar after the two up-and-coming Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan members finally won the 500m race of Saipan Swim Club's final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

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MARK RABAGO

From right, Shuman Barman, Richard Zhao, and Siwoo Lee finished 1-2-3 during the final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series last Saturday in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

MARK RABAGO

From left, Nagisa Litulumar, Kaya Braxton, and Maria Guerrero finished 1-2-3 during the final Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series last Saturday in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

TakeCare is title sponsor of NMBA tournament

The Northern Marianas Badminton Association welcomes TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc. as title sponsor of its first individual competition of the season.

"The NMBA is grateful to TakeCare Insurance for coming on board our program. We are rolling out one tournament after another, as we want to hold as many competitions as possible to prepare our athletes and officials for the hosting of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games next year," NMBA president Merlie Tolentino.

The NMBA will be featuring singles and doubles events in the TakeCare Badminton Open 2021, as it will be veering away from a team tournament format, which has been implemented in the TanHoldings and IT&E sponsored contests.

The first two team events had no registration/tournament fees and the NMBA is doing the same for the TakeCare Badminton Open 2021, so having sponsors for these events are very helpful for the association.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TakeCare Insurance Company, Inc. employees, led by health plan manager Nora Fejeran, fourth left, and Northern Marianas Badminton Association officials, led by president Merlie Tolentino, third left, pose for a group photo after formalizing their partnership for the TakeCare Badminton Open 2021 that will kick off this Friday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

"We can't emphasize enough how valuable the private companies' support are. Their assistance allows us to continue providing sports and health and wellness programs to the community and to grow

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